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THE COLLECTED WORKS

OF

DUGALD STEWART.

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OF

DUGALD STEWART, ESQ., F.R.SS.

HONORARY MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AT ST. PETERSBURG;
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMIES OF BERLIN AND OF NAPLES; OF THE
AMERICAN SOCIETIES OF PHILADELPHIA AND OF BOSTON;
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF
CAMBRIDGE; PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

EDITED BY

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, BART.,

ADVOCATE; A.M. (OXON.); ETC.; CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE;
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES; AND OF
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IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

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tinguished by the number of the edition in which they were found written; and I may farther notice, that the letter A or B marks the one or the other copy of the *first* edition which supplies the new matter to that part of the *Outlines* now prefixed as a general summary of Ethics.

By some oversight or miscalculation, the two volumes of the *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers* were, in the original edition, very unequally divided, containing severally 416 and 548 pages; and yet, apparently to secure their equality, the orderly distribution of the contents was sacrificed. For, though the whole work consists of four Books, different and determinate in their matter, the volumes did not each comprise two; but the first was made to extend into the third Book, the second there commencing in the middle of a chapter, (Book III. chap. ii. sect. 2.) Nor was this all. The able and elaborate discussion of the Free Agency of Man, which professedly belongs to Book II., and ought in propriety to constitute its concluding chapter, was placed as an Appendix, at the end of the last volume; where, though the one essential doctrine of Ethics, it appeared only as an accidental supplement. —These inconsistencies I have ventured to correct. The two volumes are now of the same thickness; each includes two Books of the *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers;* the first volume containing also the relative fragment of the *Outlines.* The Appendices are arranged in their natural connexion; and the excursive Notes appropriately distributed.

It may be also noticed, that of the Second Part of the *Outlines of Moral Philosophy,* the first and second chapters now correspond to the first and second volumes of the *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers.* The works are thus brought into a clear and complete correlation; the two chapters of the one severally referring to the two volumes of the other.

New matter is, as previously, marked by its enclosure within square brackets: this distinction may, however, have sometimes been neglected. Besides what is expressly discriminated as by the *Editor*, foot-notes not designated by numerals are his; his, also, are all more articulate references, and all short and merely expository interpolations, whether in text or title. Changes only of arrangement are not discriminated: neither are the new arguments of the excursive Notes, nor simple alterations of correction or supplement.—To this work, as to the others, significant Running Titles and a copious Index have been added.

W. H.

Edinburgh, *March* 1855.

CONTENTS.

I.—OUTLINES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

PART SECOND.

OF THE ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF OUR ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS.

PAGE

SECT. 1. *Of the Active Powers in General*, ... 3

SECT. 2. *Of our Appetites*, ... 4

SECT. 3. *Of our Desires*, ... 5

1. The Desire of Knowledge, ... 5
2. The Desire of Society, ... 6
3. The Desire of Esteem, ... 7
4. The Desire of Power, ... 8
5. The Desire of Superiority, ... 10

SECT. 4. *Of our Affections*, ... 12

1. Of the Benevolent Affections, ... 12
2. Of the Malevolent Affections, ... 15

SECT. 5. *Of Self-Love*, ... 17

SECT. 6. *Of the Moral Faculty*, ... 20

ART. 1. General Observations on the Moral Faculty; tending chiefly to show, that it is an original Principle of our Nature, and not resolvable into any other Principle or Principles more simple, ... 20

ART. 2. Analysis of our Moral Perceptions and Emotions, . 24

1. Of the Perception of Right and Wrong, . 24
2. Of the Agreeable and Disagreeable Emotions, arising from the Perception of what is Right and Wrong in Conduct; [or, in other words, of the Emotions excited by Moral Beauty and Deformity,] 31
3. Of the Perception of Merit and Demerit, . 32

ART. 3. Of Moral Obligation, ... 34

PAGE

SECT. 7. *Of certain Principles which Co-operate with our Moral Powers in their Influence on the Conduct,* 36
1. Of Decency, or a regard to Character, . . . 36
2. Of Sympathy, ... 38
3. Of the Sense of the Ridiculous, ... 39
4. Of Taste, considered in its relation to Morals, . . 40

SECT. 8. *Of Man's Free Agency,* 42

CHAPTER II.

OF THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF OUR DUTY.

SECT. 1. *Of the Duties which respect the Deity,* 44
(*Preliminary Inquiry into the Principles of Natural Religion.*)
ART. 1. Of the Existence of the Deity, . . . 45
1. Of the Foundations of our Reasoning from the Effect to the Cause, and of the Evidences of Active Power exhibited in the Universe, . 47
2. Of the Evidences of Design exhibited in the Universe, 51
ART. 2. Of the Moral Attributes of the Deity, . . 60
1. Of the Evidences of Benevolent Design in the Universe, ... 60
2. Of the Evidences of the Moral Government of the Deity, ... 67
ART. 3. Of a Future State, ... 68
1. Of the Argument for a Future State, derived from the Nature of Mind, ... 69
2. Of the Evidences of a Future State, arising from the Human Constitution, and from the Circumstances in which Man is placed, . . 72
Continuation and Conclusion of SECTION I. [—*of the Duties which respect the Deity,*] . . 75

SECT. 2. *Of the Duties which respect our Fellow-Creatures,* . . 76
ART. 1. Of Benevolence, ... 77
ART. 2. Of Justice, ... 79
1. Of Candour, ... 81
2. Of Uprightness or Integrity, ... 83
ART. 3. Of Veracity, ... 87

SECT. 3. *Of the Duties which respect ourselves,* 91
ART. 1. General Remarks on this Class of our Duties, . 91
ART. 2. Of the Duty of employing the Means we possess to promote our own Happiness, . . . 92

PAGE

ART. 3. Of Happiness, ... 93
1. Opinions of the Ancients concerning the Sovereign Good, ... 94
2. Additional Remarks on Happiness, . . 96
[Influence of the Temper on Happiness,] . 97
[Influence of the Imagination on Happiness,] . 99
[Influence of Opinions on Happiness,] . . 100
[Influence of Habits on Happiness,] . . 101

SECT. 4. *Of the different Theories which have been formed concerning the Object of Moral Approbation,* 104

SECT. 5. *Of the General Definition of Virtue,* 104

SECT. 6. *Of an Ambiguity in the words Right and Wrong, Virtue and Vice,* 106

SECT. 7. *Of the Office and Use of Reason in the Practice of Morality,* . 107

II.—PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS.

BOOKS FIRST AND SECOND.

PREFACE, ... 111

INTRODUCTION, ... 117

BOOK FIRST.

OF OUR INSTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER I.

OF OUR APPETITES, ... 126

CHAPTER II.

OF OUR DESIRES.

SECT. 1. *The Desire of Knowledge,* 131
SECT. 2. *The Desire of Society,* 135
SECT. 3. *The Desire of Esteem,* 143
SECT. 4. *The Desire of Power,* 156
SECT. 5. *Emulation, or the Desire of Superiority,* . . . 160

CHAPTER III.

OF OUR AFFECTIONS.

SECT. 1. *General Observations,* 167

PAGE

SECT. 2. *Of the Affections of Kindred,* 172
SECT. 3. *Of Friendship,* 175
SECT. 4. *Of Patriotism,* 179
SECT. 5. *Of Pity to the Distressed,* 188
SECT. 6. *Of Resentment and the various other angry Affections grafted upon it, (commonly considered by Ethical Writers as Malevolent Affections,)* 197

BOOK SECOND.

OF OUR RATIONAL AND GOVERNING PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER I.

OF A PRUDENIAL REGARD TO OUR OWN HAPPINESS, OR WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED BY MORALISTS THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-LOVE, . . 205

CHAPTER II.

OF THE MORAL FACULTY.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE MORAL FACULTY, TENDING CHIEFLY TO SHOW THAT IT IS AN ORIGINAL PRINCIPLE OF OUR NATURE, AND NOT RESOLVABLE INTO ANY OTHER PRINCIPLE OR PRINCIPLES MORE GENERAL, ... 219

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—EXAMINATION OF SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE FOREGOING CONCLUSIONS, ... 233

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUATION OF THE REMARKS ON THE OBJECTIONS STATED BY DIFFERENT WRITERS TO THE REALITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS, AND TO THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE MORAL FACULTY AMONG MANKIND, 252

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF OUR MORAL PERCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONS, ... 275
SECT. 1. *Of the Perception of Right and Wrong,* 280
SECT. 2. *Of the Agreeable and Disagreeable Emotions arising from the Perception of what is Right and Wrong in Conduct,* . . 301
SECT. 3. *Of the Perception of Merit and Demerit,* . . . 313

PAGE

CHAPTER VI.

OF MORAL OBLIGATION, ... 318

CHAPTER VII.

OF CERTAIN PRINCIPLES WHICH CO-OPERATE WITH OUR MORAL POWERS IN THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE CONDUCT.

SECT. 1. *Of Decency, or a Regard to Character,* . . . 327
SECT. 2. *Of Sympathy,* 328
SECT. 3. *Of the Sense of the Ridiculous,* 334
SECT. 4. *Of Taste, considered in its Relation to Morals,* . . 337

APPENDIX.

OF MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

SECT. 1. *Preliminary Observations.—Explanation of some Ambiguous Terms,* 343
SECT. 2. *Statement of the Common Argument for Necessity,* . . 355
SECT. 3. *View of the Question given by Hobbes,* 359
SECT. 4. *Argument for Necessity proposed by Leibnitz,* . . . 365
SECT. 5. *Defence of the Scheme of Necessity by Collins and Edwards.—Contrast between their Views and those of later Necessitarians,* 373
SECT. 6. *Is the Evidence of Consciousness in favour of the Scheme of Free-will, or that of Necessity?* 382
SECT. 7. *Of the Schemes of Free-will and of Necessity considered as influencing Practice,* 390
SECT. 8. *On the Argument for Necessity, drawn from the Prescience of the Deity,* 396

NOTES.—

TO BOOK FIRST, ... 405
TO BOOK SECOND, ... 407

OUTLINES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

PART SECOND.

OUTLINES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

PART II.*

OF THE ACTIVE AND OF THE MORAL POWERS OF MAN

110.* This part of the subject naturally divides itself into two Chapters:—The first relates to the Classification and Analysis of our Active and Moral Powers. The second to the various branches of our Duty.

CHAPTER I.

CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF OUR ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS.

SECT. I.—OF THE ACTIVE POWERS IN GENERAL.

111. The word *Action* is properly applied to those exertions which are consequent on volition: whether the exertion be made on external objects, or be confined to our mental operations. Thus, we say the mind is active, when engaged in study. In ordinary discourse, indeed, we are apt to confound together action and motion. As the operations in the minds of other men escape our notice, we can judge of their activity

* [Continued from *Elements*, vol. i. *Works*, vol. ii., p. 38. And see there, p. xii.]

only from the sensible effects it produces; and hence we are led to apply the character of Activity to those whose bodily activity is the most remarkable; and to distinguish mankind into two classes, the Active and the Speculative. In the present instance, the word Activity is used in its most extensive signification, as applicable to every voluntary exertion.

112. [According to this definition,] the primary sources of our activity, therefore, are the circumstances that influence the will. Of these, there are some which make a part of our constitution, and which, on that account, are called Active principles. Such are, Hunger, Thirst, Curiosity, Ambition, Pity, Resentment. The most important principles of this kind may be referred to the following heads.

(1.) Appetites.
(2.) Desires.
(3.) Affections.
} [Implanted Propensities.]*

(4.) Self-love.
(5.) The Moral Faculty.
} [Rational Principles of Action.]*

SECT. II.—OF OUR APPETITES.

113. This class of our active principles is distinguished by the following circumstances.

(1.) They take their rise from the body, and are common to us with the brutes.

(2.) They are not constant, but occasional.

(3.) They are accompanied with an uneasy sensation, which is strong or weak in proportion to the strength or weakness of the appetite.[1]

114. Our appetites are three in number: Hunger, Thirst, and the appetite of Sex. Of these, two were intended for the preservation of the individual; the third, for the continuance of the species; and without them, reason would have been insufficient for these important purposes.

115. Our appetites can, with no propriety, be called *selfish*, for they are directed to their respective objects, as ultimate ends;

* 2*d edit.* [1] [Hutcheson.]—1*st edit.*

and they must all have operated, *in the first instance*, prior to any experience of the pleasure arising from their gratification. Self-love, too, is often sacrificed to appetite, when we indulge ourselves in an immediate enjoyment, which we know is likely to be attended with hurtful consequences.

116. Beside our natural appetites, we have many acquired ones. Such are, an appetite for tobacco, for opium, and for intoxicating liquors.[1] In general, everything that stimulates the nervous system produces a subsequent languor, which gives rise to a desire of repetition.

117. Our occasional propensities to action and to repose are, in many respects, analogous to our appetites.

SECT. III.—OF OUR DESIRES.

118. These are distinguished from our appetites by the following circumstances.

(1.) They do not take rise from the body.

(2.) They do not operate periodically, after certain intervals; and they do not cease upon the attainment of a particular object.

119. The most remarkable active principles belonging to this class are:

(1.) The Desire of Knowledge; or the Principle of Curiosity.

(2.) The Desire of Society.

(3.) The Desire of Esteem.

(4.) The Desire of Power; or the Principle of Ambition.

(5.) The Desire of Superiority; or the Principle of Emulation.

I. THE DESIRE OF KNOWLEDGE.

120. The principle of Curiosity appears, in children, at a very early period, and is commonly proportioned to the degree of capacity they possess. The direction too which it takes, is regulated by nature, according to the order of our wants and

[1] ["Quo magis existentiam sentiant."—Tacitus [?—*Ed.*] (speaking of savages).] —*2d edit.*

necessities; being confined, in the first instance, exclusively to those properties of material objects, and those laws of the material world, an acquaintance with which is essential to the preservation of our animal existence. In more advanced years, it displays itself, in one way or another, in every individual; and gives rise to an infinite diversity in their pursuits. [Physical Causes—Mathematical—Historical—Natural History.]—*1st and 2d editt.* Whether this diversity be owing to natural predisposition, or to early education, it is of little consequence to determine; as, upon either supposition, a preparation is made for it in the original constitution of the mind, combined with the circumstances of our external situation. Its final cause is also sufficiently obvious; as it is this which gives rise, in the case of individuals, to a limitation of attention and study; and lays the foundation of all the advantages which society derives from the division and subdivision of intellectual labour.

121. The desire of knowledge is not a selfish principle. As the object of hunger is not happiness, but food; so the object of curiosity is not happiness, but knowledge.—["Est enim animorum, ingeniorumque naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio, contemplatioque naturæ."]*

II. THE DESIRE OF SOCIETY.

122. Abstracting from those affections which interest us in the happiness of others, and from all the advantages which we ourselves derive from the social union, we are led, by a natural and instinctive desire, to associate with our own species. This principle is easily discernible in the minds of children; and it is common to man with many of the brutes.

123. After experiencing, indeed, the pleasures of social life; the influence of habit, and a knowledge of the comforts inseparable from society, contribute greatly to strengthen the instinctive desire: and hence some authors have been induced to display their ingenuity, by disputing its existence. Whatever opinion we form on this speculative question, the desire of

* [Cicero, *Quaest. Acad.* lib. iv. c. xli.]

society is equally entitled to be ranked among the natural and universal principles of our constitution.

124. How very powerfully this principle of action operates, appears from the effects of solitude upon the mind. We feel ourselves in an unnatural state; and, by making companions of the lower animals, or by attaching ourselves to inanimate objects, strive to fill up the void of which we are conscious.

125. The connexion between the Desire of Society and the Desire of Knowledge is very remarkable. The last of these principles is always accompanied with a wish to impart our information to others;—insomuch, that it has been doubted if any man's curiosity would be sufficient to engage him in a course of persevering study, if he were entirely cut off from the prospect of social intercourse.[1] In this manner, a beautiful provision is made for a mutual communication, among mankind, of their intellectual attainments.

III. THE DESIRE OF ESTEEM.

126. This principle discovers itself, at a very early period, in infants; who, long before they are able to reflect on the advantages resulting from the good opinion of others, and even before they acquire the use of speech, are sensibly mortified by any expression of neglect or contempt. It seems, therefore, to be an original principle in our nature; that is, it does not appear to be resolvable into reason and experience, or into any other principle more general than itself. An additional proof of this is, the very powerful influence it has over the mind;—an influence more striking than that of any other active principle whatever. Even the love of life daily gives way to the desire of esteem; and of an esteem, which, as it is

[1] ["Si quis in cœlum ascendisset, naturamque mundi, et pulcritudinem siderum perspexisset, insuavem illam admirationem ei fore; quæ jucundissima fuisset, si aliquem cui narraret, habuisset. Sic natura solitarium nihil amat, semperque ad aliquod tamquam adminiculum annititur: quod in amicissimo quoque dulcissimum est."*—"Nec me ulla res delectabit, licet eximia sit et salutaris, quam mihi uni sciturus sim. Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam, nec enunciem, rejiciam. Nullius boni, sine socio, jucunda possessio est."] †

* [Cicero, *De Amicitia*, c. xxiii.—*Ed.*]

† [Seneca, *Epist.* vi.—*Ed.*]

only to affect our memories, cannot be supposed to interest our self-love. In what manner the association of ideas should manufacture, out of the other principles, of our constitution, a new principle stronger than them all, it is difficult to conceive.

127. As our appetites of Hunger and Thirst, though not selfish principles, are yet immediately subservient to the preservation of the individual; so the desire of Esteem, though not a social or benevolent principle, is yet immediately subservient to the good of society.

IV. THE DESIRE OF POWER.

128. Whenever we are led to consider ourselves as the authors of any effect, we feel a sensible pride of exultation, in the consciousness of Power; and the pleasure is, in general, proportioned to the greatness of the effect, compared to the smallness of our exertion.

129. The infant, while still on the breast, delights in exerting its little strength upon every object it meets with; and is mortified when any accident convinces it of its own imbecility. The pastimes of the boy are, almost without exception, such as suggest to him the idea of his power:—and the same remark may be extended to the active sports, and the athletic exercises, of youth and of manhood.

130. As we advance in years, and as our animal powers lose their activity and vigour, we gradually aim at extending our influence over others, by the superiority of fortune and of situation, or by the still more flattering superiority of intellectual endowments; by the force of our understanding; by the extent of our information; by the arts of persuasion, or the accomplishments of address. What but the idea of power pleases the orator, in the consciousness of his eloquence; when he silences the reason of others by superior ingenuity; bends to his purposes their desires and passions; and, without the aid of force, or the splendour of rank, becomes the arbiter of the fate of nations?

131. To the same principle we may trace, in part, the plea

sure arising from the discovery of general theorems. Every such discovery puts us in possession of innumerable particular truths, or particular facts; and gives us a ready command of a great stock of knowledge to which we had not access before. The desire of power, therefore, comes, in the progress of reason and experience, to act as an auxiliary to our instinctive desire of knowledge.

132. The idea of power is, partly at least, the foundation of our attachment to property. It is not enough for us to have the use of an object;—we desire to have it completely at our own disposal, without being responsible to any person whatever.[1]

133. Avarice is a particular modification of the desire of power, arising from the various functions of money in a commercial country. Its influence as an active principle is much strengthened by habit and association; [and in consequence of being the immediate spring of action to the great body of the people, it often acquires a mastery over all our other passions, and survives in full vigour the extinction of the rest.][2]—2*d edit.*

134. The love of liberty proceeds, in part, from the same source; from a desire of being able to do whatever is agreeable to our own inclination. Slavery mortifies us, because it limits our power.

135. Even the love of tranquillity and retirement has been resolved by Cicero into the same principle:—"Multi autem et sunt, et fuerunt, qui eam, quam dico, Tranquillitatem expetentes, a negotiis publicis se removerint, ad otiumque perfugerint. . . . . His idem propositum fuit, quod regibus, ut ne qua re egerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur; cujus proprium

[1] ["There is an unspeakable pleasure in calling anything *one's own;* a freehold, though it be but in ice and snow, will make the owner pleased in the possession, and stand in the defence of it."—Addison's *Freeholder.*]—3*d edit.*

[2] [Among the different subjects of speculation proposed by Bishop Berkeley in *The Querist*, the two following occur:—

"Whether the real end and aim of men be not Power? and whether he who could have everything else at his wish or will, would value money?

"Whether the public aim in every well-governed state be not, that each member, according to his just pretensions and industry, should have power?]—1*st and* 3*d editt.*

est, sic vivere, ut velis. Quare, cum hoc commune sit potentiæ cupidorum cum iis, quos dixi, otiosis; alteri se adipisci id posse arbitrantur, si opes magnas habeant; alteri, si contenti sint et suo, et parvo."*

136. The idea of power is also, in some degree, the foundation of the pleasure of Virtue. We love to be at liberty to follow our own inclinations, without being subjected to the control of a superior; but this alone is not sufficient to our happiness. When we are led, by vicious habits, or by the force of passion, to do what reason disapproves, we are sensible of a mortifying subjection to the inferior principles of our nature, and feel our own littleness and weakness. A sense of freedom and independence, elevation of mind, and the pride of virtue, are the natural sentiments of the man who is conscious of being able, at all times, to calm the tumults of passion, and to obey the cool suggestions of duty and honour.[1]

V. THE DESIRE OF SUPERIORITY.

137. Emulation has been sometimes classed with the Affections; but it seems more properly to fall under the definition of our Desires. It is, indeed, frequently accompanied with ill-will towards our rivals; but it is the desire of superiority which is the active principle, and the malevolent affection is only a concomitant circumstance.

138. A malevolent affection is not even a *necessary* concomitant of the desire of superiority. It is possible, surely, to conceive, (although the case may happen but rarely,) that Emulation may take place between men who are united by the most cordial friendship, and without a single sentiment of ill-will disturbing their harmony.

*[*De Officiis*, lib. i. c. xx.]

[1] ["Quid est libertas? Potestas vivendi ut velis. Quis igitur vivit ut vult, nisi qui recta sequitur, qui gaudet officio, cui vivendi via considerata atque provisa est; qui ne legibus quidem propter metum paret, sed eas sequitur atque colit, quod salutare maximè esse judicat: qui nihil dicit, nihil facit, nihil cogitat denique, nisi libenter ac libere: cujus omnia consilia, resque omnes quas gerit, ab ipso proficiscuntur, eodemque feruntur; nec est ulla res quæ plus apud eum polleat, quam ipsius voluntas atque judicium."—Cicero, *Paradoxa*, xlii.]—1*st and* 3*d edits.*

139. When Emulation is accompanied with malevolent affection, it assumes the name of Envy. The distinction between these two principles of action is accurately stated by Dr. Butler. "Emulation is merely the desire and hope of equality with, or of equality or superiority over others with whom we compare ourselves. . . . . To desire the attainment of this superiority, by the *particular means* of others being brought down to our own level, or below it, is, I think, the distinct notion of Envy. From whence it is easy to see, that the real end which the natural passion, Emulation, and which the unlawful one, Envy, aims at, is exactly the same, (namely, that of equality or superiority;) and, consequently, that to do mischief is not the end of Envy, but merely the means it makes use of to attain its end."*—["Æmulatio molestia quædam, non quod alteri bona adsint, sed quod non etiam sibi. Æmulus se præparat ad bona sibi adipiscenda; invidus studet ut nec proximus hæc habeat.—Juvenes et magnanimi ad æmulationem proclivi."—Aristotle.† —"Invidia turbulenta molestia, ob res secundas, non illius qui sit indignus, sed illius qui sit æqualis aut similis. Invident homines iis qui ipsis tempore, et loco, et ætate et existimatione propinqui sunt. Idem est alienis malis gaudens ac invidus."—Aristotle.]‡—*2d edit.*

140. Some faint symptoms of Emulation may be remarked among the lower animals: but the effects it produces among them are perfectly insignificant. In our own race, it operates in an infinite variety of directions, and is one of the principal springs of human improvement.

---

141. As we have artificial appetites, so we have also artificial desires. Whatever conduces to the attainment of any object of natural desire, is itself desired on account of its subserviency to this end; and frequently comes, in process of time, to acquire, in our estimation, an intrinsic value. It is thus that wealth becomes, with many, an ultimate object of pursuit; although it

* [Butler's *Sermons—Upon Human Nature*, § 19, note.]

† [*Rhet.*, lib. ii. c. 13.]

‡ [Ibid., lib. ii. c. 13. Both of Goulston's translation, as I recollect.]

is undoubtedly valued at first, merely as the means of attaining other objects. In like manner, men are led to desire dress, equipage, retinue, furniture, on account of the estimation in which they are supposed to be held by the public. Such desires have been called, by Dr. Hutcheson, Secondary Desires.* Their origin is easily explicable, on the principle of Association.

SECTION IV.—OF OUR AFFECTIONS.

142. Under this title are comprehended all those active principles, whose direct and ultimate object is the communication either of enjoyment or of suffering, to any of our fellow-creatures. According to this definition, Resentment, Revenge, Hatred, belong to the class of our affections, as well as Gratitude or Pity. Hence a distinction of the affections into *Benevolent* and *Malevolent.*

I. OF THE BENEVOLENT AFFECTIONS.

143. Our Benevolent affections are various; and it would not, perhaps, be easy to enumerate them completely. The Parental and the Filial affections,[1]—the affections of Kindred,—Love,[2]—Friendship,—Patriotism,—Universal Benevolence,—Gratitude, —Pity to the distressed,—are some of the most important. Besides these, there are peculiar benevolent affections, excited by those moral qualities in other men, which render them either amiable, or respectable, or objects of admiration.

144. In the foregoing enumeration, it is not to be understood that all the benevolent affections particularly specified, are stated as original principles, or ultimate facts in our constitution. On the contrary, there can be little doubt, that several of them may be analyzed into the same general principle, differently modified according to the circumstances in which it operates. This, however, (notwithstanding the stress which has been sometimes laid upon it,) is chiefly a question of arrange-

* [See *Nature and Conduct of the Passions*, sect. i. § 2, p. 8, ed. 3.]

[1] [Taylor's *Elements*, pp. 365, 374, 384, 388.]—1*st and* 3*d editt.* [Hutcheson's *Inquiry concerning Good and Evil*, sect. i. art. 10; also sect. v. art. 1.]—2*d edit.*

[2] [Institution of Marriage.]—1*st and* 3*d editt.*

ment. Whether we suppose these principles to be all ultimate facts, or some of them to be resolvable into other facts more general, they are equally to be regarded as constituent parts of human nature; and, upon either supposition, we have equal reason to admire the wisdom with which that nature is adapted to the situation in which it is placed. The laws which regulate the acquired perceptions of Sight, are surely as much a part of our frame, as those which regulate any of our original perceptions; and although they require, for their development, a certain degree of experience and observation in the individual, the uniformity of the result shows, that there is nothing arbitrary nor accidental in their origin.

145. The question, indeed, concerning the origin of our different affections, leads to some curious disquisitions; but is of very subordinate importance to those inquiries which relate to their nature, and laws, and uses. In many philosophical systems, however, it seems to have been considered as the most interesting subject of discussion connected with this part of the human constitution.

146. To treat, in detail, of the nature, laws, and uses of our benevolent affections, is obviously inconsistent with the brevity of a treatise, confined by its plan to a statement of definitions and divisions, and of such remarks as are necessary for explaining the arrangement on which it proceeds. The enumeration already mentioned (§ 143) suggests an order according to which this subject may be treated in a course of lectures on Moral Philosophy. What follows is equally applicable to all the various principles which come under the general description.

147. The exercise of all our kind affections is accompanied with an agreeable feeling or emotion. So much, indeed, of our happiness is derived from this source, that those authors whose object is to furnish amusement to the mind, avail themselves of these affections as one of the chief vehicles of pleasure. Hence the principal charm of tragedy, and of every other species of pathetic composition. How far it is of use to separate, in this manner, "the luxury of pity" from the opportunities of active exertion, may perhaps be doubted.

148. The pleasures of kind affection are not confined to the virtuous. They mingle also with our criminal indulgences; and often mislead the young and thoughtless, by the charms they impart to vice and to folly.

149. Even when these affections are disappointed in the attainment of their objects, there is a degree of pleasure mixed with the pain:—and sometimes the pleasure greatly predominates.

150. The final cause of the agreeable emotion connected with the exercise of Benevolence, in all its various modes, was evidently to induce us to cultivate, with peculiar care, a class of our active principles so immediately subservient to the happiness of human society.

151. Notwithstanding, however, the pleasure arising from the indulgence of the benevolent affections, these affections have nothing selfish in their origin—as has been fully demonstrated by different writers. This conclusion, although contrary to the systems of many philosophers, both ancient and modern, is not only agreeable to the obvious appearance of the fact, but is strongly confirmed by the analogy of the other active powers already considered.

152. We have found, that the preservation of the individual, and the continuation of the species, are not intrusted to Self-love and Reason alone; but that we are endowed with various appetites, which, without any reflection on our part, impel us to their respective objects. We have also found, with respect to the acquisition of knowledge, (on which the perfection of the individual, and the improvement of the species, essentially depend,) that it is not entrusted solely to Self-love and Benevolence; but that we are prompted to it by the implanted principle of Curiosity. It farther appeared, that, in addition to our sense of duty, another incentive to worthy conduct is provided in the desire of Esteem, which is not only one of our most powerful principles of action, but continues to operate in full force, to the last moment of our being. Now, as men were plainly intended to live in society, and as the social union could not subsist without a mutual interchange of good offices; would

it not be reasonable to expect, agreeably to the analogy of our nature, that so important an end would not be intrusted solely to the slow deductions of Reason, or to the metaphysical refinements of Self-love; but that some provision would be made for it in a particular class of active principles which might operate, like our appetites and desires, independently of our reflection? To say this of Parental Affection or of Pity, is saying nothing more in their favour than what was affirmed of Hunger and Thirst; that they prompt us to particular objects, without any reference to our own enjoyment.

II. OF THE MALEVOLENT AFFECTIONS.

153. The names which are given to these in common discourse are various; Hatred, Jealousy, Envy, Revenge, Misanthropy; but it may be doubted, if there be any principle of this kind, implanted by nature, in the mind, excepting the principle of Resentment; the others being grafted on this stock, by our erroneous opinions and criminal habits.

154. Resentment has been distinguished into Instinctive and Deliberate. The former operates in man exactly as in the lower animals, [arising necessarily from any feeling of *pain* excited by external objects; and prompting us to a retaliation on the *cause* of our suffering, without any exercise whatever of reflection or reason,]* and was plainly intended to guard us against sudden violence, [by rousing the powers both of mind and body to active exertion,]† in cases where reason would come too late to our assistance. This species of resentment subsides, as soon as we are satisfied that no injury was intended.

155. Deliberate Resentment is excited only by intentional injury; and, therefore, implies a sense of justice, or of moral good and evil. [It is plainly peculiar to a rational nature; and perhaps, it is not very distinguishable from Instinctive or Animal Resentment in the ruder state of our own species. It is observed by Robertson, that "the desire of vengeance which takes possession of the heart of savages, resembles the instinctive rage of an animal, rather than the passion of a man, and

* *1st and 2d editt.* † *1st edit.*

that it turns with undiscerning fury, even against inanimate objects." He adds, "that if struck with an arrow in battle, they will tear it from the wound, break and bite it with their teeth, and dash it on the ground."*]—1*st edit.*

156. The Resentment excited by an injury offered to another person, is properly called Indignation. In both cases, the principle of action seems to be fundamentally the same; and to have for its object, not the communication of suffering to a sensitive being, but the punishment of injustice and cruelty.

157. As all the benevolent affections are accompanied with pleasant emotions, so all the malevolent affections are sources of pain and disquiet. This is true even of Resentment; how justly soever it may be roused by the injurious conduct of others. [" When we consider that, on the one hand, every benevolent affection is pleasant in its nature, is health to the soul, and a cordial to the spirits; that nature has made even the outward expression of benevolent affections in the countenance, pleasant to every beholder, and the chief ingredient of beauty in the *human face divine;* that, on the other hand, every malevolent affection, not only in its faulty excesses, but in its moderate degrees, is vexation and disquiet to the mind, and even gives deformity to the countenance, it is evident that, by these signals, nature loudly admonishes us to use the former as our daily bread, both for health and pleasure, but to consider the latter as a nauseous medicine, which is never to be taken without necessity; and even then in no greater quantity than the necessity requires."—Reid.†]—1*st edit.*

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158. In the foregoing review of our active powers, no mention has been made of our passions. The truth is, that this word does not, in strict propriety, belong exclusively to any one class of these principles; but is applicable to all of them, when they are suffered to pass the bounds of moderation. In such cases, a sensible agitation or commotion of the body is produced;

* [*History of America.*]

† [*On the Active Powers, Essay* III. chap. v.—*Works*, p. 570.]

our reason is disturbed ; we lose, in some measure, the power of self-command, and are hurried to action by an almost irresistible impulse. Ambition, the desire of Fame, Avarice, Compassion, Love, Gratitude, Resentment, Indignation, may all, in certain circumstances, be entitled to this appellation. When we speak of *passion* in general, we commonly mean the passion of Resentment; probably because this affection disturbs the reason more, and leaves us less the power of self-government, than any other active principle of our nature.

SECT. V.—OF SELF-LOVE.

159. The constitution of man, if it were composed merely of the active principles hitherto mentioned, would be analogous to that of the brutes. His reason, however, renders his nature and condition, on the whole, essentially different from theirs.

160. They are incapable of looking forward to consequences, or of comparing together the different gratifications of which they are susceptible; and accordingly, as far as we are able to perceive, they yield to every present impulse. But man is able to take a comprehensive survey of his various principles of action, and to form a plan of conduct for the attainment of his favourite objects. Every such plan implies a power of refusing occasionally to particular active principles, the gratification which they demand.

161. According to the particular active principle which influences habitually a man's conduct, his character receives its denomination of Covetous, Ambitious, Studious, or Voluptuous; and his conduct is more or less systematical, as he adheres to his general plan with steadiness or inconstancy.

162. A systematical steadiness in the pursuit of a particular end, while it is necessary for the complete gratification of our ruling passion, is far more favourable to the general improvement of the mind, than the dissipation of attention resulting from an undecided choice, among the various pursuits which human life presents to us. Even the systematical voluptuary is able to command a much greater variety of sensual indulgences,

and to continue them to a much more advanced age, than the thoughtless prodigals; and how low soever the objects may be which occupy the busy bee, they seldom fail, by engaging them habitually in one direction, to give a certain degree of cultivation to his intellectual faculties.

163. The only exception, perhaps, which can be mentioned to the last remark, is in the case of those men whose leading principle of action is *Vanity*; and who, as their rule of conduct is borrowed from without, must, in consequence of this very circumstance, be perpetually wavering and inconsistent in their pursuits. Accordingly, it will be found, that such men, although they have frequently performed splendid actions, have seldom risen to eminence in any one particular career, unless when, by a rare concurrence of accidental circumstances, this career has been steadily pointed out to them through the whole of their lives, by public opinion.

164. A systematical conduct in life, invariably directed to certain objects, is more favourable to happiness, than one which is influenced merely by occasional inclination and appetite.—[Shaftesbury.] — *1st and 3d edits.* Even the man who is decidedly and uniformly unprincipled, is free from much of the disquiet which disturbs the tranquillity of those whose characters are more mixed, and more inconsistent.

165. There is another, and very important respect, in which the nature of man differs from that of the brutes. He is able to avail himself of his past experience, in avoiding those enjoyments which he knows will be succeeded by suffering, and in submitting to lesser evils, which he knows are to be instrumental in procuring him a greater accession of good. He is able, in a word, to form the general notion of happiness, and to deliberate about the most effectual means of attaining it.

166. It is implied in the very idea of happiness, that it is a desirable object; and therefore self-love is an active principle very different from those which have been hitherto considered. These, for aught we know, may be the effect of arbitrary appointment; and they have, accordingly, been called *implanted*

principles. The desire of happiness may be called a *rational* principle of action; being peculiar to a rational nature, and inseparably connected with it.

167. In prefixing to this section the title of self-love, the ordinary language of modern philosophy has been followed. The expression, however, is exceptionable; as it suggests an analogy (where there is none in fact) between that regard which every rational being must necessarily have to his own happiness, and those benevolent affections which attach us to our fellow-creatures—[*Φιλαυτία.*]—1*st edit.* The similarity, too, between the words self-love and selfishness, has introduced much confusion into ethical disquisitions.

168. The word selfishness is always used in an unfavourable sense; and hence some authors have been led to suppose, that vice consists in an excessive regard to our own happiness. It is remarkable, however, that although we apply the epithet *selfish* to avarice, and to low and private sensuality, we never apply it to the desire of knowledge or to the pursuits of virtue, which are certainly sources of more exquisite pleasure than riches or sensuality can bestow.

169. The truth will probably be found, upon examination, to be this; that the word selfishness, when applied to a pursuit, has no reference to the *motive* from which the pursuit proceeds, but to the *effect* it has on the conduct. Neither our animal appetites, nor avarice, nor curiosity, nor the desire of moral improvement, arise from self-love; but some of these active principles disconnect us with society more than others; and consequently, though they do not indicate a greater regard for our own happiness, they betray a greater unconcern for the happiness of our neighbours. The pursuits of the miser have no mixture whatever of the social affections;—on the contrary, they continually lead him to state his own interest in opposition to that of other men. The enjoyments of the sensualist all expire within his own person; and, therefore, whoever is habitually occupied in the search of them, must of necessity neglect the duties which he owes to mankind. It is otherwise with the desire of knowledge, which is always accompanied

with a strong desire of social communication; and with the love of moral excellence, which, in its practical tendency, coincides so remarkably with benevolence, that many authors have attempted to resolve the one principle into the other.

170. That the word selfishness is by no means synonymous with a regard to our own happiness, appears farther from this, that the blame we bestow on those pursuits which are commonly called selfish, is founded, *partly*, on the sacrifice they imply of our true interest, to the inferior principles of our nature. When we see, for example, a man enslaved by his animal appetites; so far from considering him as under the influence of an excessive self-love, we pity and despise him for neglecting the higher enjoyments which are placed within his reach.

SECTION VI.—OF THE MORAL FACULTY.

ARTICLE FIRST.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE MORAL FACULTY, TENDING CHIEFLY TO SHEW THAT IT IS AN ORIGINAL PRINCIPLE OF OUR NATURE, AND NOT RESOLVABLE INTO ANY OTHER PRINCIPLE OR PRINCIPLES MORE SIMPLE.

171. The facts alluded to in the last paragraph of the foregoing section, have led some philosophers to conclude, that Virtue is merely a matter of prudence, and that a sense of duty is but another name for a rational self-love, [or an enlightened regard to our own interest.]—*2d edit.* This view of the subject was far from being unnatural; for we find, that these two principles, in general, lead to the same course of action; and we have every reason to believe, that if our knowledge of the universe were more extensive, they would be found to do so in all instances whatever. [Accordingly—Ancient moralists—Sense of Duty as resolvable into the whole of Ethics—Supreme good.]—*1st and 2d editt.*

172. That we have, however, a sense of duty which is not resolvable into a regard to our happiness, appears from various considerations.

(1.) There are, in all languages, words, equivalent to Duty

and to Interest, which men have constantly distinguished in their signification. They coincide, in general, in their applications, but they convey very different ideas. [Honestum et Utile—*Τὸ καλον—καθῆκον*—Reasonable; acknowledged even by those who do so inconsistently.]—1*st edit.*

(2.) The emotions arising from the contemplation of what is *right* or *wrong* in conduct, are different, both in degree and in kind, from those which are produced by a calm regard to our own happiness. This is particularly remarkable in the emotions excited by the moral conduct of others; for such is the influence of self-deceit, that few men judge with perfect fairness of their own actions. The emotions excited by characters exhibited in histories and in novels, are sometimes still more powerful than what we experience from similar qualities displayed in the circle of our acquaintance, because the judgment is less apt to be warped by partiality or by prejudice. The representations of the stage, however, afford the most favourable of all opportunities for observing their effects. As every species of Enthusiasm operates most forcibly when men are collected in a crowd, our moral feelings are exhibited on a larger scale in the theatre than in the closet. And accordingly, the slightest hint suggested by the poet, raises to transport the passions of the audience, and forces involuntary tears from men of the greatest reserve, and the most correct sense of propriety.

(3.) Although philosophers have shewn that a sense of duty, and an enlightened regard to our own happiness, conspire, in most instances, to give the same direction to our conduct, so as to put it beyond a doubt, that, even in this world, a virtuous life is true wisdom; yet this is a truth by no means obvious to the common sense of mankind, but deduced from an extensive view of human affairs, and an accurate investigation of the remote consequences of our different actions.

It is from experience and reflection, therefore, that we learn the tendency of virtue to advance our worldly prosperity; and, consequently, the great lessons of morality, which are obvious to the capacity of all mankind, cannot have been suggested to them merely by a regard to their own interest.

(4.) The same conclusion is strongly confirmed by the early period of life at which our moral judgments make their appearance;—long before children are able to form the general notion of happiness, and indeed in the very infancy of their reason.

173. In order to elude the force of some of the foregoing arguments, it has been supposed that the rules of morality were, *in the first instance*, brought to light by the sagacity of philosophers and politicians, and that it is only in consequence of the influence of education that they appear to form an original part of the human constitution.—The diversity of opinions among different nations, with respect to the morality of particular actions, has been considered as a strong confirmation of this doctrine.

174. But the power of education, although great, is confined within certain limits; for it is by co-operating with the natural principles of the mind, that it produces its effects. Nay, this very susceptibility of education, which is acknowledged to belong universally to the race, presupposes the existence of certain principles which are common to all mankind.

175. The influence of education, in diversifying the appearances which human nature exhibits, depends on that law of our constitution which was formerly called the Association of Ideas: And this law supposes, in every instance, that there are opinions and feelings essential to the human frame, by a combination with which external circumstances lay hold of the mind, and adapt it to its accidental situation.

176. Education may vary, in particular cases, the opinions of individuals with respect to the beautiful and the sublime. But education could not create our notions of Beauty or Deformity, of Grandeur or Meanness. In like manner, education may vary our sentiments with respect to particular actions, but could not create our notions of Right and Wrong, of Merit and Demerit.

177. The historical facts which have been alleged to prove that the moral judgments of mankind are entirely factitious, will be found, upon examination, to be either the effects of misrepresentation; or to lead to a conclusion directly the reverse

of what has been drawn from them:—proper allowance being made, 1*st*, For the different circumstances of mankind in different periods of society;—2*dly*, For the diversity of their speculative opinions;—and 3*dly*, For the different moral import of the same action, under different systems of external behaviour.

178. All these doctrines, how erroneous soever, have been maintained by writers not unfriendly to the interests of morality. But some licentious moralists have gone much farther, and have attempted to shew, that the motives of all men are fundamentally the same, and that what we commonly call Virtue is mere Hypocrisy.

179. The disagreeable impression which such representations of human nature leave on the mind, affords a sufficient refutation of their truth. If there be really no essential distinction between virtue and vice, whence is it that we conceive one class of qualities to be more excellent and meritorious than another? Why do we consider Pride, or Vanity, or Selfishness, to be less worthy motives for our conduct, than disinterested Patriotism, or Friendship, or a determined adherence to what we believe to be our duty? Why does our species appear to us less amiable in one set of philosophical systems than in another?

180. It has been a common error among licentious moralists, to confound the question concerning the actual attainments of mankind, with the question concerning the reality of moral distinctions; and to substitute a satire on vice and folly, instead of a philosophical account of the principles of our constitution. Admitting the picture which has been sometimes drawn of the real depravity of the world to be a just one, the gloom and dissatisfaction which it leaves on the mind are sufficient to demonstrate that we are formed with the love and admiration of moral excellence, and that this is enjoined to us as the law of our nature. "Hypocrisy itself," as Rochefoucault has remarked, "is a homage which vice renders to virtue."*

* [*Maximes.*]

ARTICLE SECOND.—ANALYSIS OF OUR MORAL PERCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONS.

181. After establishing the universality of moral perception as an essential part of the human constitution, the next question that occurs, is, how our notions of Right and Wrong are formed? Are we to refer them to a particular principle in our nature, appropriated to the perception of these qualities, as our external senses are appropriated to the perception of the qualities of matter?—or are they perceived by the same intellectual power which discovers truth in the abstract sciences?—or are they resolvable into other notions still more simple and general than themselves? All these opinions have been maintained by authors of eminence.—[Cudworth and Clarke, Hutcheson, Smith.]—*2d edit.* In order to form a judgment on the point in dispute, it is necessary to analyze the state of our minds when we are spectators of any good or bad action performed by another person, or when we reflect on the actions performed by ourselves. On such occasions we are conscious of three different things.

(1.) The perception of an action as Right or Wrong.

(2.) An emotion of pleasure or of pain; varying in its degree, according to the acuteness of our moral sensibility.

(3.) A perception of the merit or demerit of the agent.

I. OF THE PERCEPTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG.

182. The controversy concerning the origin of our moral ideas, took its rise in modern times in consequence of the writings of Mr. Hobbes. According to him, we approve of virtuous actions, or of actions beneficial to society, from self-love; as we know, that whatever promotes the interest of society, has, on that very account, an indirect tendency to promote our own.—He farther taught, that, as it is to the institution of government we are indebted for all the comforts and the confidence of social life, the laws which the civil magistrate enjoins are the ultimate standards of morality.

183. Dr. Cudworth,* who, in opposition to the system of Mr.

* [*Immutable Morality*, passim.]

Hobbes, first shewed in a satisfactory manner that our ideas of Right and Wrong are not derived from positive law, referred the origin of these ideas to the power which distinguishes truth from falsehood; and it became, for some time, the fashionable language among moralists to say, that virtue consisted, not in obedience to the law of a superior, but in a conduct conformable to Reason.—[As this doctrine of *Cudworth* has been a fruitful subject of controversy among philosophers ever since his time, I have stated my own ideas with respect to it at such length in the *Outlines* as to render it unnecessary for me to offer *here*, [in Lecture,] any comment on the remaining §§ of this Article. I shall therefore do little more than read them for the sake of connexion.]—2*d edit.*

184. At the time that Cudworth wrote, no accurate classification had been attempted, of the principles of the human mind. His account of the office of Reason, accordingly, in enabling us to perceive the distinction between right and wrong, passed without censure, and was understood merely to imply, that there is an eternal and immutable distinction between right and wrong, no less than between truth and falsehood; and that both these distinctions are perceived by our rational powers, or by those powers which raise us above the brutes.

185. The publication of Locke's *Essay* introduced into this part of science a precision of expression unknown before, and taught philosophers to distinguish a variety of powers which had formerly been very generally confounded. With these great merits, however, his work has capital defects; and, perhaps, in no part of it are these defects more important, than in the attempt he has made to deduce the origin of our knowledge entirely from Sensation and Reflection. These, according to him, are the sources of all our simple ideas; and the only power that the mind possesses, is to perform certain operations of Analysis, Combination, Comparison, &c., on the materials with which it is thus supplied.

186. This system led Mr. Locke to some dangerous opinions, concerning the nature of moral distinctions; which he seems to have considered as the offspring of Education and Fashion.

Indeed, if the words Right and Wrong neither express simple ideas, nor relations discoverable by reason, it will not be found easy to avoid adopting this conclusion.*

187. In order to reconcile Locke's account of the origin of our ideas, with the immutability of moral distinctions, different theories were proposed concerning the nature of Virtue. According to one, for example, it was said to consist in a conduct conformable to the *Fitness of things:* According to another, in a conduct *conformable to Truth.*—The great object of all these theories may be considered as the same;—to remove Right and Wrong from the class of simple ideas, and to resolve moral rectitude into a conformity with some relation perceived by reason or the understanding.

188. Dr. Hutcheson saw clearly the vanity of these attempts, and hence he was led, in compliance with the language of Locke's philosophy, to refer the origin of our moral ideas to a particular power of perception, to which he gave the name of the *Moral Sense.* "All the ideas, (says he,) or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate powers of perception, internal or external, which we may call *Senses.* . . . . Reasoning or *Intellect* seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or discern the *Relations* of those received."†

189. According to this system, as it has been commonly explained, our perceptions of right and wrong are *impressions*, which our minds are made to receive from particular actions; similar to the relishes and aversions given us for particular objects of the external or internal senses.—[That this was Hutcheson's own idea, appears from the following passage, in which he endeavours to obviate some dangerous notions supposed to follow from his doctrine:—"But let none imagine, that calling the ideas of *Virtue* and *Vice* Perceptions of a *Sense*, upon apprehending the actions and affections of another, does diminish their reality, more than the like assertions con-

* [*Essay*, B. I. ch. iii. § 1, *seq.*; B. II. ch. xxviii. § 4, *seq.*, et alibi.]

† [*Essay on the Nature of the Passions, &c.—Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, sect. i. p. 241, 3d edit.]

cerning all Pleasure and Pain, Happiness or Misery," &c.* Mr. Hume, whose philosophy coincides in this respect with Hutcheson's, says still more explicitly :—" As virtue is an end, and desirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys; it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches; some internal taste or feeling, or whatever you please to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other," &c.† In the passage now quoted from Hume—slight hint—but in some other passages, openly and avowedly. The words *Right* and *Wrong* (according to him) signify, &c.—See § 190.]—2*d edit.*

190. From the hypothesis of a moral sense, various sceptical conclusions have been deduced by later writers. The words Right and Wrong, it has been alleged, signify nothing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, any more than the words sweet and bitter, pleasant and painful; but only certain effects in the mind of the spectator. As it is improper, therefore, (according to the doctrines of modern philosophy,) to say of an object of taste, that it is sweet; or of heat, that it is in the fire; so it is equally improper to say of actions, that they are right or wrong. It is absurd to speak of morality as a thing independent and unchangeable; inasmuch as it arises from an arbitrary relation between our constitution and particular objects.—[" The distinction of moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain which results from the view of any sentiment or character; and, as that pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, it follows that there is just so much *Vice* or *Virtue* in any character as every one places in it, and that it is impossible, in this particular, we can ever be mistaken."‡]—2*d edit.*

191. In order to avoid these supposed consequences of Dr. Hutcheson's philosophy, an attempt has been made by some later writers, in particular by Dr. Price, to revive the doctrines

* [*Illustrations upon the Moral Sense*, sect. iv. p. 288, 3d edit.]

† [*Essays*, Vol. II. App. i. § 5.]

‡ [*Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III. part ii. § 8.]

of Dr. Cudworth, and to prove, that moral distinctions, being perceived by reason or the understanding, are equally immutable with all other kinds of truth.

192. This is the most important question that can be stated, with respect to the theory of morals. The obscurity in which it is involved arises chiefly from the use of indefinite and ambiguous terms.

193. That moral distinctions are perceived by a sense, is implied in the definition of a sense which Dr. Hutcheson has given, (§ 188:) provided it be granted, (as Dr. Price has done explicitly,*) that the words Right and Wrong express simple ideas, or ideas incapable of analysis.

194. It may be farther observed, in justification of Dr. Hutcheson, that the sceptical consequences deduced from a supposition of a moral sense, do not necessarily result from it. Unfortunately, most of his illustrations were taken from the secondary qualities of matter, which, since the time of Descartes, philosophers have been, in general, accustomed to refer to the mind, and not to the external object. But if we suppose our perception of Right and Wrong to be analogous to the perception of Extension and Figure, and other primary qualities, the reality and immutability of moral distinction seems to be placed on a foundation sufficiently satisfactory to a candid inquirer, (§§ 31 and 32.)

195. The definition, however, of a Sense, which Hutcheson has given, is by far too general, and was plainly suggested to him by Locke's account of the origin of our ideas, (§ 185.) The words Cause and Effect, Duration, Number, Equality, Identity, and many others, express simple ideas, as well as the words Right and Wrong; and yet it would surely be absurd to ascribe each of them to a particular power of perception.—Notwithstanding this circumstance, as the expression *Moral Sense* has now the sanction of use, and as, when properly explained, it cannot lead to any bad consequences, it may be still retained without inconvenience, in ethical disquisitions.—[*Sensus Recti et Honesti.*]—*2d edit.*

* [*Review of the principal Questions in Morals*, Ch. I. sect. iii. p. 59, *seq.*]

196. To what part of our constitution, then, shall we ascribe the origin of the ideas of Right and Wrong? Price says,—to the Understanding; and endeavours to shew, in opposition to Locke and his followers, that "the power which understands, or the faculty that discerns truth, is a source of new ideas."*

197. This controversy turns chiefly on the meaning of words. The origin of our ideas of right and wrong, is manifestly the same with that of the other simple ideas already mentioned; and whether it be referred to the understanding or not, seems to be a matter of mere arrangement; provided it be granted, that the words Right and Wrong express qualities of actions, and not merely a power of exciting certain agreeable or disagreeable emotions in our minds.

198. It may perhaps obviate some objections against the language of Cudworth and Price, to remark, that the word Reason is used in senses which are extremely different.† Sometimes to express the whole of those powers which elevate man above the brutes, and constitute his rational nature;—more especially, perhaps, his intellectual powers. Sometimes to express the power of deduction or argumentation. The former is the sense in which the word is used in common discourse; and it is in this sense that it seems to be employed by those writers who refer to it the origin in our moral ideas. Their antagonists, on the other hand, understand, in general, by Reason, the power of deduction or argumentation; a use of the word which is not unnatural, from the similarity between the words Reason and Reasoning, but which is not agreeable to its ordinary meaning. "No hypothesis (says Dr. Campbell) hitherto invented, hath shewn that, by means of the discursive faculty, without the aid of any other mental power, we could ever obtain a notion of either the beautiful or the good."[1] The remark is undoubtedly true, and may be applied to all those systems which ascribe to Reason the origin of our moral ideas, if the expressions, Reason and Discursive Faculty, be used as synony-

* [*Review of the principal Questions, &c. in Morals*, Chap. I. sect. ii. p. 19.]

† See *Elements*, Vol. II. (*Works*, vol. iii.) pp. 6-12.

[1] *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Vol. I. p. 204. [Book I. chap. vii. § 4, note.]

mous. But if the word Reason be used in a more general sense, to denote merely our rational and intellectual nature, there does not seem to be much impropriety in ascribing to it the origin of those simple notions, which are not excited in the mind by the immediate operation of the senses; but which arise in consequence of the exercise of the intellectual powers upon their various objects.

199. A variety of intuitive judgments might be mentioned, involving simple ideas, which it is impossible to trace to any origin, but to the power which enables us to form these judgments. Thus, it is surely an intuitive truth, that the sensations of which I am conscious, and all those I remember, belong to one and the same being, which I call *myself*. Here is an intuitive judgment involving the simple idea of *Identity*. In like manner, the changes which I perceive in the universe impress me with a conviction that some cause must have operated to produce them. Here is an intuitive judgment, involving the simple idea of *Causation*. When we consider the adjacent angles made by a straight line standing upon another, and perceive that their sum is equal to two right angles, the judgment we form involves the simple idea of *Equality*. To say, therefore, that Reason or the Understanding is a source of new ideas, is not so exceptionable a mode of speaking as has been sometimes supposed.—According to Locke, *Sense* furnishes our ideas, and *Reason* perceives their agreements or disagreements. But the truth is, that these agreements and disagreements are, in many instances, simple ideas, of which no analysis can be given; and of which the origin must therefore be referred to Reason, according to Locke's own doctrine.

200. The opinion we form, however, on this point, is of little moment, provided it be granted that the words Right and Wrong express qualities of actions. When I say of an act of justice, that it is right; do I mean merely that the act excites pleasure in my mind, as a particular colour pleases my eye, in consequence of a relation which it bears to my organ? or do I mean to assert a truth which is as independent of my constitution, as the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles? Scepticism may be indulged in both cases,

about mathematical and about moral truth: but in neither case does it admit of a refutation by argument.

201. The immutability of moral distinctions has been called in question, not only by sceptical writers, but by some philosophers who have adopted their doctrine, with the pious design of magnifying the perfections of the Deity.[1] Such authors certainly do not recollect, that what they add to his power and majesty, they take away from his moral attributes; for if moral distinctions be not immutable and eternal, it is absurd to speak of the goodness or of the justice of God; [and accordingly, these expressions are given up expressly by Paley, as phrases altogether nugatory and unmeaning.—See vol. i. p. 82.]—1*st edit.*

II. OF THE AGREEABLE AND DISAGREEABLE EMOTIONS ARISING FROM THE PERCEPTION OF WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG IN CONDUCT; [OR, IN OTHER WORDS, OF THE EMOTIONS EXCITED BY MORAL BEAUTY AND DEFORMITY.]—2*d edit.*

202. It is impossible to behold a good action, without being conscious of a benevolent affection, either of love or of respect, towards the agent; and consequently, as all our benevolent affections include an agreeable feeling, every good action must be a source of pleasure to the spectator. Beside this, other agreeable feelings, of order, of utility, of peace of mind, &c., come, in process of time, to be associated with the general idea of virtuous conduct.

203. Those qualities in good actions, which excite agreeable feelings in the mind of the spectator, form what some moralists have called the Beauty of Virtue.

204. All this may be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to explain what is meant by the Deformity of Vice.

205. Our perception of moral beauty and deformity is plainly

[1] [The names of some theologians who held this opinion, (during the dark ages,) are given by Cudworth; and, I am sorry to say, that, so far from being completely exploded, it has misled the speculations of some writers of considerable genius and learning in our own times, particularly Dr. Johnson, Soame Jenyns, and Mr. Paley.—I shall not answer; because the reasoning has been anticipated and unanswerably refuted by Cudworth.]—1*st edit.* See *Immutable Morality*, Book I. ch. i. §§ 1-5.—*Ed.*

distinguishable from our perception of actions as right or wrong: But the distinction has been too little attended to by philosophers. Among the moderns, in particular, some have confined their attention almost solely to our perception of actions as right or wrong; and have thereby rendered their works abstract and uninteresting. Others, by dwelling exclusively on our perception of Moral Beauty and Deformity, have been led into enthusiasm and declamation, and have furnished licentious moralists with a pretext for questioning the immutability of moral distinctions.

206. The emotions of pleasure and of pain arising from the contemplation of moral beauty and deformity, are so much more exquisite than any that are produced by the perception of material forms, that some philosophers have held, that the words Beauty and Sublimity express, in their *literal* signification, the qualities of mind; and that material objects affect us only by means of the moral ideas they suggest. This was a favourite doctrine of the Socratic school, and has been supported with great ingenuity by several modern writers.

207. Whatever opinion we adopt on this speculative question, there can be no dispute about the fact, that good actions and virtuous characters form the most delightful of all objects to the human mind; and that there are no charms in the external universe so powerful as those which recommend to us the cultivation of the qualities that constitute the perfection and happiness of our nature.

208. It was a leading object of the ancient moralists, to establish such a union between philosophy and the fine arts, as might add to the natural beauty of virtue every attraction which the imagination could impart. The effect which might be produced in this way may be easily conceived, from the examples we daily see of the influence of association in concealing the meanness and deformity of fashionable vices.

III. OF THE PERCEPTION OF MERIT AND DEMERIT.

209. The virtuous actions performed by other men, not only excite in our minds a benevolent affection towards them, or a

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disposition to promote their happiness; but impress us with a sense of the merit of the agents. We perceive them to be the proper objects of love and esteem, and that it is morally right that they should receive their reward. We feel ourselves called on to make their worth known to the world, in order to procure them the favour and respect they deserve; and if we allow it to remain secret, we are conscious of injustice, in suppressing the natural language of the heart.

210. On the other hand, when we are witnesses of an act of selfishness, of cruelty, or of oppression—whether we ourselves are the sufferers or not—we are not only inspired with aversion and hatred towards the delinquent, but find it difficult to restrain our indignation from breaking loose against him. By this natural impulse of the mind, a check is imposed on the bad passions of individuals; and a provision is made, even before the establishment of positive laws, for the good order of society.

211. In our own case; when we are conscious of doing well, we feel that we are entitled to the esteem and attachment of our fellow-creatures; and we know, with the evidence of a perception, that we enjoy the approbation of the invisible witness of our conduct. Hence it is that we have not only a sense of merit, but an anticipation of reward, and look forwards to the future with increased confidence and hope.

212. The feelings of remorse which accompany the consciousness of guilt, involve, in like manner, a sense of ill-desert, and an anticipation of future punishment.

213. Although, however, our sense of merit and demerit must convince the philosopher of the connexion which the Deity has established between virtue and happiness, he does not proceed on the supposition, that, on particular occasions, miraculous interpositions are to be made in his favour. That virtue is, even in this world, the most direct road to happiness, he sees to be a fact; but he knows that the Deity governs by general laws; and when he feels himself disappointed in the attainment of his wishes, he acquiesces in his lot, and consoles himself with the prospect of futurity. It is an error of the vulgar to expect.

that good or bad fortune are always to be connected, in particular instances, with good or bad actions;—a prejudice which is a source of much disappointment in human life, but of which the prevalence in all ages and countries affords a striking illustration of the natural connexion between the ideas of virtue and of merit.

ARTICLE THIRD.—OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

214. According to some systems, moral obligation is founded entirely on our belief that virtue is enjoined by the command of God. But how, it may be asked, does this belief impose an obligation? Only one of two answers can be given:—either, that there is a moral fitness that we should conform our will to that of the Author and the Governor of the universe; or that a rational self-love should induce us, out of prudence, to study every means of rendering ourselves acceptable to the almighty Arbiter of happiness and misery. On the first supposition, we reason in a circle. We resolve our sense of moral obligation into our sense of religion; and the sense of religion into that of moral obligation.

215. The other system which makes virtue a mere matter of prudence, although not so obviously unsatisfactory, leads to consequences which sufficiently show that it is erroneous. Among others, it leads us to conclude, 1. That the disbelief of a future state absolves from all moral obligation, excepting in so far as we find virtue to be conducive to our present interest; 2. That a being independently and completely happy, cannot have any moral perceptions, or any moral attributes.

216. But farther, the notions of reward and punishment presuppose the notions of right and wrong. They are sanctions of virtue, or additional motives to the practice of it; but they suppose the existence of some previous obligation.

217. In the last place, if moral obligation be constituted by a regard to our situation in another life, how shall the existence of a future state be proved by the light of nature? or how shall we discover what conduct is acceptable to the Deity? The truth is, that the strongest argument for such a state is deduced

from our natural notions of right and wrong, of merit and demerit; and from a comparison between these and the general course of human affairs.

218. It is absurd, therefore, to ask, why we are bound to practise virtue. The very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation. Every being, who is conscious of the distinction between Right and Wrong, carries about with him a law which he is bound to observe; notwithstanding he may be in total ignorance of a future state. "What renders obnoxious to punishment, is not the foreknowledge of it, but merely the violating a known obligation."—Butler.—[*Τὸ μὲν ὀρθὸν νόμος ἐστὶ βασιλικός.**]—*1st edit.*

219. From what has been stated, it follows, that the moral faculty, considered as an active power of the mind, differs essentially from all the others hitherto enumerated. The least violation of its authority fills us with remorse. On the contrary, the greater the sacrifices we make, in obedience to its suggestions, the greater are our satisfaction and triumph.

220. The supreme authority of conscience, although beautifully described by many of the ancient moralists, was not sufficiently attended to by modern writers, as a fundamental principle in the science of ethics, till the time of Dr. Butler. Too little stress is laid on it by Lord Shaftesbury; and the omission is the chief defect of his philosophy.

221. If this distinction between the moral faculty and our other active powers be acknowledged, it is of the less consequence what particular theory we adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas: and accordingly Mr. Smith, though he resolves moral approbation ultimately into a feeling of the mind, represents the supremacy of conscience as a principle which is equally essential to all the different systems that have been proposed on the subject. "Upon whatever we suppose our moral faculties to be founded,—whether upon a certain modification of reason,

* [Plato, *De Lege*, ? 9.]

[The nearest approximation to this passage is in the *Analogy*, part i. ch. vi., entitled, "*Of the opinion of Necessity considered as influencing practice;*" but neither in that chapter, nor in any other place of Butler's writings, do I recollect, or at the moment am I able to recover, the articulate quotation.]

upon an original instinct, called a moral sense, or upon some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted that they were given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of this authority, which denote that they were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions, to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites, and to judge how far each of them was either to be indulged or restrained. It is the peculiar office of these faculties to judge, to bestow censure or applause upon all the other principles of our nature."*

SECTION VII.—OF CERTAIN PRINCIPLES WHICH CO-OPERATE WITH OUR MORAL POWERS IN THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE CONDUCT.[1]

222. In order to secure still more completely the good order of society, and to facilitate the acquisition of virtuous habits, nature has superadded to our moral constitution a variety of auxiliary principles, which sometimes give rise to a conduct agreeable to the rules of morality, and highly useful to mankind; where the merit of the individual, considered as a moral agent, is extremely inconsiderable. Hence, some of them have been confounded with our moral powers, or even supposed to be of themselves sufficient to account for the phenomena of moral perception, by authors whose views of human nature have not been sufficiently comprehensive. The most important principles of this description are,—1. A regard to Character; 2. Sympathy; 3. The sense of the Ridiculous; and, 4. Taste. The principle of Self-love (which was treated of in a former section [ch. i. § 5]) co-operates powerfully to the same purposes.

I. OF DECENCY, OR A REGARD TO CHARACTER.

223. It was before observed, (126,) that the desire of esteem operates in children before they have a capacity of distinguishing right from wrong; and that the former principle of action continues for a long time to be much more powerful than the

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VI. sect. iii. Introd.]

[1] [See Reynolds' *Discourses*, pp. 297-299.]—1*st edit.*

latter. Hence, it furnishes a most useful and effectual engine in the business of education; more particularly, by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial. It teaches us, for example, to restrain our appetites within those bounds which *decency* prescribes, and thus forms us to habits of moderation and temperance. And, although our conduct cannot be denominated virtuous, so long as a regard to the opinion of others is our only motive, yet the habits we thus acquire in infancy and childhood render it more easy for us, as we advance to maturity, to subject our passions to the authority of reason and conscience.[1]

224. That our sense of duty is not resolvable into a desire of obtaining the good opinion of our fellow-creatures, may be inferred from the following considerations:—

(1.) The desire of esteem can only be effectually gratified by the actual possession of those qualities for which we wish to be esteemed;—[insomuch that we are conscious of a sort of fraud or imposition on the world, when we receive praise which we know we do not deserve.]—2*d edit.*

(2.) The merit of a virtuous action is always enhanced in the opinion of mankind, when it is discovered in those situations of life, where the individual cannot be suspected of any view to the applauses of the world.—["Mihi quidem laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditatione et sine populo teste fiunt; non quo fugiendus est, (omnia enim benefacta in luce se collocari volunt,) sed tamen nullum theatrum virtuti conscientia majus est."*—So far, therefore, are the *desire of esteem* and the *sense of duty* from being radically the same principle of action, that the former is only an *auxiliary* to the latter; and is always understood to diminish the merit of the agent, in proportion to the influence it has over his determinations. An additional proof of this may be derived from the miserable effects produced on the conduct by the *desire of fame* when it is the sole or even the governing principle of our actions. In this

[1] [Such, I presume, was the sentiment of *Sylla*, in the anticipation which he formed of the future character of Cæsar.]—2*d edit.*

* [Cicero, *Tuscul. Disp.* Lib. II. c. xxvi.]

case, indeed, it seldom fails to disappoint its own purpose, for a lasting fame is scarcely to be acquired without a steady and consistent conduct; and such a conduct can only arise from a conscientious regard to the suggestions of our own breasts. The pleasure therefore which a being capable of reflection derives from the possession of *fame*, so far from being the *original motive* to worthy actions, *presupposes* the existence of other and *higher* motives in the mind.]—2*d edit.*

(3.) When a competition takes place between our sense of duty and a regard to public opinion, if we sacrifice the former to the latter, we are filled with remorse and self-condemnation, and the applauses of the multitude afford us but an empty and unsatisfactory recompense; whereas a steady adherence to the right never fails to be its own reward, even when it exposes us to calumny and misrepresentation.—[These considerations sufficiently prove that a *regard to character*, although a most useful auxiliary to our sense of duty, is no more than an *auxiliary;* and that the two principles of action are essentially and radically distinct from each other.]—2*d edit.*

II. OF SYMPATHY.

225. That there is an exquisite pleasure annexed to the sympathy or fellow-feeling of other men with our joys and sorrows, and even with our opinions, tastes, and humours, is a fact obvious to vulgar observation. It is no less evident, that we feel a disposition to accommodate the state of our own minds to that of our companions, wherever we feel a benevolent affection towards them; and that this accommodating temper is in proportion to the strength of our affection. In such cases, sympathy would appear to be grafted on benevolence; and perhaps it might be found, on an accurate analysis, that the greater part of the pleasures which it yields is resolvable into those which arise from the exercise of kindness, and from the consciousness of being beloved.

226. The same word *sympathy* is applied in a loose and popular sense, to various phenomena in the Animal Economy; to the correspondence, for example, in the motions of the eyes:

and to the connexion which exists between different organs of the body, in respect of health, or of disease. It is also applied to those contagious bodily affections which one person is apt to catch from another; such as yawning, stammering, squinting, sore eyes, and the disorders commonly distinguished by the name of Hysterical.

227. In all these different instances there is, no doubt, a certain degree of analogy; such as completely accounts for their being comprehended, in ordinary discourse, under one general name; but where philosophical precision is aimed at, there is ground for many distinctions. Hence the necessity of limiting, by an accurate definition, the sense in which this very vague and equivocal word is to be understood, when it is introduced into any scientific discussion.

228. The facts generally referred to *sympathy* have appeared to Mr. Smith so important and so curiously connected, that he has been led to attempt an explanation, from this single principle, of all the phenomena of moral perception.

229. The large mixture of valuable truth contained in this most ingenious Theory, and the light which it throws on a part of our frame, formerly very little attended to by philosophers, entitle the Author to the highest rank among Systematical Moralists; but, on a closer examination of the subject, it will be found that he has been misled, like many other eminent writers, by an excessive love of simplicity; mistaking a subordinate principle in our moral constitution (or rather a principle *superadded* to our moral constitution, as an auxiliary to the sense of duty) for that Faculty which distinguishes Right from Wrong; and which (by what name soever we may choose to distinguish it) recurs on us constantly, in all our ethical disquisitions, as an ultimate fact in the nature of man.

III. OF THE SENSE OF THE RIDICULOUS.

230. The natural and proper object of Ridicule, is those smaller improprieties in character and manners which do not rouse our feelings of moral indignation, nor impress us with a melancholy view of human depravity.

231. While this part of our constitution enlarges the fund of our enjoyment, by rendering the more trifling imperfections of our fellow-creatures a source of amusement to their neighbours,[1] it excites the exertions of every individual to correct those imperfections by which the ridicule of others is likely to be provoked. As our eagerness, too, to correct these imperfections may be presumed to be weak in proportion as we apprehend them to be, in a moral view, of trifling moment, we are so formed, that the painful feelings produced by ridicule are often more poignant than those arising from the consciousness of having rendered ourselves the objects of resentment or of hatred.

232. The sense of the ridiculous, although it has a manifest reference to such a scene of imperfection as we are placed in at present, is one of the most striking characteristics of the human constitution, as distinguished from that of the lower animals; and has an intimate connexion with its highest and noblest principles. In the education of youth, nothing requires more serious attention than its proper regulation.

IV. OF TASTE, CONSIDERED IN ITS RELATION TO MORALS.

233. From the explanation formerly given (202, 203, 204) of the import of the phrases *Moral Beauty*, and *Moral Deformity*, it may be easily conceived, in what manner the character and the conduct of our fellow-creatures may become subservient to the gratification of Taste. The use which the Poet makes of this class of our intellectual pleasures is entirely analogous to the resources which he borrows from the charms of external nature.

234. The power of moral taste, like that which has for its object the beauty of material forms, and the various productions of the fine arts, requires much exercise for its development and culture. The one species of taste, also, as well as the other, is susceptible of a false refinement, injurious to our own happiness, and to our usefulness as members of society.

235. Considered as a principle of action, a cultivated moral

[1] ["Les sots sont ici-bas pour nos menus plaisirs."—Gresset.]—3*d edit*

taste, while it provides an effectual security against the grossness necessarily connected with many vices, cherishes a temper of mind friendly to all that is amiable, or generous, or elevated in our nature. When separated, however, as it sometimes is, from a strong sense of duty, it can scarcely fail to prove a fallacious guide; the influence of fashion, and of other casual associations, tending perpetually to lead it astray. This is more particularly remarkable in men to whom the gratifications of *Taste in general* form the principal object of pursuit; and whose habits of life encourage them to look no higher for their rule of judgment, than the way of the world.

236. The language employed by some of the Greek Philosophers in their speculations concerning the nature of virtue, seems, on a superficial view, to imply, that they supposed the moral faculty to be wholly resolvable into a sense of the Beautiful.[1] And hence, Lord Shaftesbury and others have been led to adopt a phraseology which has the appearance of substituting Taste, in contradistinction to Reason and Conscience, as the ultimate standard of Right and Wrong.

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237. From each of the four principles now enumerated, unfortunate consequences result, wherever it prevails in the character, as the leading motive to action. Where they all maintain their due place, in subordination to the moral faculty, they tend at once to fortify virtuous habits, and to recommend them by the influence of amiable example, to the imitation of others.

238. A partial consideration of the phenomena of moral perception, connected with one or other of these principles, has suggested some of the most popular theories concerning the origin of our moral ideas. An attention to the moral faculty alone, without regard to the principles which were intended to operate as its auxiliaries, and which contribute, in fact, so powerfully to the good order of society, has led a few philosophers into an opposite extreme;—less dangerous, undoubtedly

[1] [Cicero.]—*2d edit*

in its practical tendency, but less calculated, perhaps, to recommend ethical disquisitions to the notice of those who are engrossed with the active concerns of life.

SECT. VIII.—OF MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

239. All the foregoing inquiries concerning the Moral Constitution of Man, proceed on the supposition that he has a freedom of choice between good and evil; and that when he deliberately performs an action which he knows to be wrong, he renders himself justly obnoxious to punishment. That this supposition is agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind, will not be disputed.

240. From very early ages, indeed, the truth of the supposition has been called in question by a few speculative men, who have contended, that the actions we perform are the necessary result of the constitutions of our minds, operated on by the circumstances of our external situation; and that what we commonly call moral delinquencies are as much a part of our destiny, as the corporeal or intellectual qualities we have received from nature. The argument in support of this doctrine has been proposed in various forms, and has been frequently urged with the confidence of demonstration.

241. Among those, however, who hold the language of Necessitarians, an important distinction must be made; as some of them not only admit the reality of moral distinctions, but insist, that it is on their hypothesis alone, that these distinctions are conceivable. With such men, the scheme of necessity may be a harmless opinion: and there is ground even for suspecting, that it might be found to differ from that of their antagonists, more in appearance than in reality, if due pains were taken to fix the meaning of the indefinite and ambiguous terms which have been employed on both sides of the argument.

242. By other philosophers, the consequences which are generally supposed to be connected with this system, have been admitted in all their extent; or rather, the system has been inculcated with a view to establish these consequences. When

proposed in this form, it furnishes the most interesting subject of discussion which can employ human ingenuity; and upon which our speculative opinions can hardly fail to affect very materially both our conduct and our happiness.

248. Dr. Isaac Barrow, who wrote towards the end of the seventeenth century, observes, that "The scepticism which flourished in its time, grew up from the doctrine of the fatal necessity of all actions and events, as from its proper root."* The same remark will be found to apply to the sceptical philosophy of the present age.†

249. It is sufficient, in these Outlines, to mark the place which the question seems naturally to occupy in the order of study. Detached hints would throw but little additional light on a controversy, which has been industriously darkened by all the powers of sophistry.—Reid.—*2d edit.*

* [See *Immutable Morality*, Book I. chap. i. sect. 5.]

† ["The opinion of Necessity seems to be the very basis upon which infidelity grounds itself."—Butler's *Analogy*, [Part I. ch. vi.—*Of Moral Government*] p. 166, (3d edit.)] —*2d edit.*

CHAPTER II.

OF THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF OUR DUTY.

245. The different theories which have been proposed concerning the nature and essence of Virtue, have arisen chiefly from attempts to trace all the branches of our duty to one principle of action; such as a rational Self-love, Benevolence, Justice, or a disposition to obey the will of God.

246. In order to avoid those partial views of the subject, which naturally take their rise from an undue love of system, the following inquiries proceed, [in an analytical order,]* upon an arrangement which has, in all ages, recommended itself to the good sense of mankind. This arrangement is founded on the different objects to which our duties relate:—1. The Deity; 2. Our Fellow-creatures; and, 3. Ourselves.

[After having thus laid a solid foundation for our theoretical reasonings concerning Virtue, by an examination of our principal duties in detail, we shall be enabled to rise safely, in the way of *Analysis*, to the common quality in which they all concur, and which renders them proper objects of moral approbation. A contrary arrangement would expose us to the danger of circumscribing our inquiries, at our first outset, within the limits of an arbitrary and partial definition.]—2*d edit.*

SECT. I.—OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT THE DEITY.

247. As our duties to God, (so far as they are discoverable by the light of nature,) must be inferred from the relation in which we stand to him as the Author and Governor of the

* 1*st edit.*

Universe, an examination of the principles of Natural Religion forms a necessary introduction into this section. Such an examination, besides, being the reasonable consequence of those impressions which his works produce on every attentive and well-disposed mind, may be itself regarded, both as one of the duties we owe to Him, and as the expression of a moral temper sincerely devoted to truth, and alive to the sublimest emotions of gratitude and of benevolence.—[Agreeably to this observation, it is remarked by one of the most enlightened of the heathen moralists, that the *first* step towards the worship of God, is to employ our reason in contemplating *the proofs of his existence;* the *second*, to acknowledge those evidences of his *moral attributes* which are everywhere stamped upon his works. —"*Primus* est Deorum cultus, *Deos credere;* deinde, reddere illis *majestatem suam*, reddere *bonitatem*, sine quâ nulla majestas est."—Seneca, [*Epistola* xcv.—*Ed.*] I mention this consideration chiefly to show that the *Preliminary Inquiry* on which we are now to enter is by no means to be considered in the light of a *digression* from the appropriate business of *Ethics.*] —2*d edit.*

PRELIMINARY INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL RELIGION.

ARTICLE FIRST.—OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE DEITY.

248. On this subject, two modes of reasoning have been employed, which are commonly distinguished by the titles of the Arguments *a priori* and *a posteriori;* the former founded on certain metaphysical propositions which are assumed as axioms; the latter appealing to that systematical order, and those combinations of means to ends, which are everywhere conspicuous in Nature.

249. The argument *a priori* has been enforced with singular ingenuity by Dr. Clarke, whose particular manner of stating it seems to have been suggested to him by the following passage in Newton's *Principia:**—"Æternus est et infinitus, omnipotens

* [See above, *Dissertation*, p. 290, *seq.*]

et omnisciens; id est, durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum. Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium, sed durat et adest. Durat semper, et adest ubique; et existendo semper et ubique, durationem et spatium constituit."[1]—Proceeding on the same principles, Dr. Clarke argues, that "Space and Time are only abstract conceptions of an immensity and eternity, which force themselves into our belief; and, as immensity and eternity are not substances, they must be the attributes of a being who is necessarily immense and eternal."*—"These (says Dr. Reid)† are the speculations of men of superior genius; but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination in a region beyond the limits of human understanding, I am unable to determine."—[Clarke—Price, last edition—Hamilton.]—1*st edit.*

250. Without calling in question the solidity of Clarke's demonstration, we may be allowed to say, that the argument *a posteriori* is more level to the comprehension of ordinary men, and more satisfactory to the philosopher himself. Indeed, in inquiries of this sort, the presumption is strongly in favour of that mode of reasoning which is the most simple and obvious, —"Quicquid nos vel meliores vel beatiores facturum est, aut in aperto, aut in proximo, posuit natura."‡

251. The existence of a Deity, however, does not seem to be an intuitive truth. It requires the exercise of our reasoning powers to present it, in its full force, to the mind. But the process of reasoning consists only of a single step; and the premises belong to that class of first principles which form an essential part of the human constitution, (Part I. § 71, (3.) These premises are two in number:—the one is, That everything which begins to exist must have a cause;—the other, That a combination of means conspiring to a particular end, implies intelligence.

[1] *Principia*, Scholium generale.

* [*Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, Vol. I. prop. iv.—*Collection of Papers between Leibnitz and Clarke;* Clarke's first and third Replies, &c.]

† [*Intellectual Powers*, Essay I. ch. iii.—*Works*, p. 343, *b*.]

‡ [Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, L. VII. c. i.]

I. OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR REASONING FROM THE EFFECT TO THE CAUSE, AND OF THE EVIDENCES OF ACTIVE POWER EXHIBITED IN THE UNIVERSE.

252. It was before observed, (Introd. § 3,) that our knowledge of the course of nature is entirely the result of observation and experiment; and that there is no instance in which we perceive such a connexion between two successive events, as might enable us to infer the one from the other as a necessary consequence. [Not peculiar to Hume's philosophy.]—1*st edit.*

253. From this principle, which is now very generally admitted by philosophers, Mr. Hume has deduced an objection to the argument *a posteriori* for the existence of the Deity. After having proved that we cannot get the idea of necessary connexion, from examining the conjunction between any two events, he takes for granted, that we have no other idea of Cause and Effect, than of two successive events which are invariably conjoined; that we have therefore no reason to think, that any one event in nature is necessarily connected with another, or to infer the operation of power from the changes which we observe in the universe.—[In opposition to this—that we have an idea of power not indeed derived from an examination of the succession of events, but which is suggested to the mind by every change we see in the material universe.]—1*st edit.*

254. To perceive the connexion between Mr. Hume's premises and his conclusion, it is necessary to recollect, that, according to his system, "all our ideas are nothing but copies of our impressions; or, in other words, that it is impossible for us to *think* of anything which we have not antecedently *felt*, either by our external or internal senses."* Having proved, therefore, that external objects, as they appear to our senses, give us no idea of power or of necessary connexion, and also that this idea cannot be copied from any internal impression, (that is, cannot be derived from reflection on the operations of our own minds,) he thinks himself warranted to conclude, that

* [*Essays—Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Sect. VII. Part ii.]

we have no such idea. "One event (says he) follows another, but we never observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of any thing which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion seems to be, That we have no idea of connexion or power at all; and that these words are absolutely without any meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life."*

255. Are we, therefore, to reject as perfectly unintelligible, a word which is to be found in all languages, merely because it expresses an idea, for the origin of which we cannot account upon a particular philosophical system? Would it not be more reasonable to suspect, that the system was not perfectly complete, than that all mankind should have agreed in employing a word which conveyed no meaning?

256. With respect to Mr. Hume's theory concerning the origin of our ideas,† it is the less necessary to enter into particular discussions, that it coincides, in the main, with the doctrine of Locke, to which some objections, which appear to be insurmountable, were formerly stated, (§ 199.)—[According to Locke, all our ideas are derived from *Sensation* and *Reflection;* our ideas of the sensible qualities of matter being derived from the former, and those of our own internal operations from the latter.‡ According to Hume, (see § 254,) the two theories seem to me to be precisely the same in substance, and to differ only in *this;* that Hume's statement, in consequence of its conciseness, is the more obscure of the two. The remark therefore made on Locke's doctrine in a former section, is no less applicable to that which is now under consideration, (see § 199.)]—*2d edit.* Upon neither theory is it possible to explain the origin of those simple notions, which are not received immediately by any external sense, nor derived immediately from our own consciousness; but which are necessarily formed by the mind, while we are exercising our intellectual powers upon their proper objects.

* [Ibidem, Sect. VII. Part ii.]

† [Ibidem, Sect. II. and Sect. VII. Parts i. ii.]

‡ [*Essay*, Book II. chap. i. sects. 3, 4, *et alibi.*]

257. These very slight hints are sufficient to shew, that we are not entitled to dispute the reality of our idea of power, because we cannot trace it to any of our senses. The only question is, If it be certain, that we annex any idea to the word power, different from that of mere succession? The following considerations, among many others, prove, that the import of these two expressions is by no means the same.

(1.) If we have no idea of cause and effect, different from that of mere succession, it would appear to us no less absurd to suppose two events disjoined, which we have constantly seen connected, than to suppose a change to take place without a cause. The former supposition, however, is easy in all cases whatever. The latter may be safely pronounced to be impossible.—[Leibnitz—Malebranche.]—1*st edit.* B.

(2.) Our experience of the established connexions of physical events is by far too narrow a foundation for our belief that every change must have a cause. Mr. Hume himself has observed, that "the vulgar always include the idea of *contiguity in place* in the idea of causation;"* or, in other words, that they conceive matter to produce its effects by impulse alone. If, therefore, every change which had fallen under our notice had been preceded by apparent impulse, experience might have taught us to conclude, from observing a change, that a previous impulse had been given; or, according to Mr. Hume's notion of *a cause*, that a cause had operated to produce this effect. Of the changes, however, which we see, how small a number is produced by apparent impulse? And yet, in the case of every change, without exception, we have an irresistible conviction of the operation of some cause. How shall we explain, on Mr. Hume's principles, the foundation of this conviction, in cases in which impulse has apparently no share.

258. The question, however, still recurs: In what manner do we acquire the idea of Causation, Power, or Efficiency?—But this question, if the foregoing observations be admitted, is comparatively of little consequence; as the doubts which may arise on the subject tend only (without affecting the reality

* [See *Treatise of Human Nature*, Part III. sect. ix.]

of the idea or notion) to expose the defects of particular philosophical systems.

259. The most probable account of the matter seems to be, that the idea of causation, or of power, necessarily accompanies the perception of change, in a way somewhat analogous to that in which [the idea of *Time* necessarily accompanies every act of memory with respect to past events; or in which]* sensation implies a being who feels,—and thought, a being who thinks. A power of beginning motion, for example, is an attribute of mind, no less than sensation or thought; and wherever motion commences, we have evidence that mind has operated.

260. Are we therefore to conclude, that the divine power is constantly exerted to produce the phenomena of the material world, and to suppose that one and the same cause produces that infinite multiplicity of effects, which are every moment taking place in the universe?

261. In order to avoid this conclusion, which has been thought, by many, too absurd to deserve a serious examination, various hypotheses have been proposed. The most important of these may be referred to the following heads.

(1.) That the phenomena of nature are the result of certain active powers essentially inherent in matter. This doctrine is commonly called *Materialism.*—[Clarke's *Letters to Dodwell.* Language of Newtonians.]—1*st and* 2*d editt.*

(2.) That they result from certain active powers communicated to matter at its first formation.—["It hath pleased the Author of all things to *inspirit* matter." "This attraction or gravitating power I take to be congenial (congenital?) to matter, and imprinted on all the matter of the universe by the Creator's *fiat* at the creation."—Derham.]—1*st edit.*

(3.) That they take place in consequence of general laws established by the Deity.

(4.) That (as Cudworth maintains) they are produced by "a vital and spiritual, but unintelligent and necessary agent, created by the Deity for the execution of his purposes."†

* [2*d edit.*] *Digression* appended to it, *concerning the Plastic Life of Nature*, especially § 5.]

† [*Intellectual System*, B. I. chap. iii.

(5.) That they are produced by *minds* connected with the particles of matter.

(6.) That the universe is a machine formed and put in motion by the Deity; and that the multiplicity of effects which take place, may perhaps have all proceeded from one single act of his power.*

262. These different hypotheses (some of which will be found, on examination, to resolve into unmeaning or unintelligible propositions, and all of which are liable to insurmountable objections) have been adopted by ingenious men, in preference to the simple and sublime doctrine, which supposes the order of the universe to be not only at first established, but every moment maintained, by the incessant agency of One Supreme Mind;—a doctrine against which no objection can be stated, but what is founded on prejudices resulting from our own imperfections.—This doctrine does not exclude the possibility of the Deity's acting occasionally by subordinate agents or instruments.

263. The observations, indeed, hitherto made, are not sufficient of themselves to authorize us to form any conclusion with respect to the unity of God; but when properly illustrated, they will be found to warrant fully the following inference: That the phenomena of the universe indicate the constant agency of power, which cannot belong to matter; or, in other words, that they indicate the constant agency of Mind. Whether these phenomena, when compared together, bear marks of a diversity or of a unity of design, and, of consequence, whether they suggest the government of one almighty Ruler, or of a plurality of independent divinities, are inquiries which belong to the next head of our argument.

II. OF THE EVIDENCES OF DESIGN EXHIBITED IN THE UNIVERSE.

264. The proof of the existence of God, drawn from the Order of the universe, is commonly called the argument from Final Causes. The expression (which was first introduced by

* [Leibnitian doctrine.]

Aristotle) is far from being proper; but is retained in this treatise, in compliance with established use.

265. It is justly remarked by Dr. Reid, that the argument from Final Causes, when reduced to a syllogism, contains two propositions. The major is, That Design may be traced from its effects; the minor, That there are appearances of Design in the universe. The ancient sceptics, he says, granted the first, but denied the second. The moderns (in consequence of the discoveries in natural philosophy) have been obliged to abandon the ground which their predecessors maintained, and have dsputed the major proposition.

266. Among those who have denied the possibility of tracing design from its effects, Mr. Hume is the most eminent. According to him, all such inferences are inconclusive, being neither demonstrable by reasoning, nor deducible from experience.

267. In examining Mr. Hume's argument on this subject, Dr. Reid admits, that the inferences we make of design from its effects, are not the result of reasoning, or of experience; but still he contends, that such inferences may be made with a degree of certainty, equal to what the human mind is able to attain in any instance whatever. The opinions we form of the talents of other men, nay, our belief that other men are intelligent beings, are founded on this very inference of design from its effects. Intelligence and design are not objects of our senses, and yet we judge of them every moment from external conduct and behaviour, with as little hesitation as we pronounce on the existence of what we immediately perceive.

268. Other philosophers have opposed the major proposition of the syllogism, by an argument somewhat different.—In order to judge of the wisdom of any design, it is necessary (they observe) to know, first, what end the artist proposes to himself, and then, to examine the means which he has employed to accomplish it. But, in the universe, all we see is, that certain things *are* accomplished, without having an opportunity of comparing them with a plan previously proposed.—A stone thrown at random must necessarily hit one object or another.

When we see, therefore, such an effect produced, we are not entitled, independently of other information, to praise the dexterity of the marksman.

269. Among a great variety of considerations which might be urged in reply to this objection, the following seem to deserve particular attention.

(1.) Although, from a single effect, we may not be entitled to infer intelligence in the cause, yet the case is different when we see a number of causes conspiring to *one* end. We here see not only that an effect takes place, but have an intuitive conviction that this was the very effect intended. From seeing a single stone strike an object, we may not be authorized to conclude that this was the object aimed at. But what conclusion should we draw, if we saw the same object invariably hit by a number of stones thrown in succession?

(2.) A multiplicity of cases might be mentioned, in which we have really an opportunity of comparing the wisdom of nature with the ends to which it is directed. Of this, many remarkable examples occur in the economy of the human body. When any accident or disease injures our frame, it is well known that the body possesses within itself a power of alleviating or remedying the evil. In such instances, we not only see an effect produced, but we see the operation of natural causes directed to the particular purpose of restoring the healthful state of the system.

(3.) There are many cases, particularly in the animal economy, in which the same effect is produced, in different instances, by very different means; and in which, of consequence, we have an opportunity of comparing the wisdom of nature with the ends she has in view. "Art and means (says Baxter)* are designedly multiplied, that we might not take it for the effect of chance; and in some cases, the method itself is different, that we might see it is not the effect of surd necessity."—[See also Derham.]—1*st edit.* The science of comparative anatomy furnishes beautiful confirmations of the foregoing doctrine. From observing the effect produced by a particular

* [See *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, (1737,) Vol. I. sect. ii.]

organ in the case of any one animal, we might not, perhaps, be warranted to conclude that it was in order to produce this effect that the organ was contrived. But when, in the case of different species of animals, we see the same effect brought about by means extremely different, it is impossible for us to doubt that it was this common end which, in all these instances, Nature had in view.—Nor is this all. In comparing the anatomy of different tribes of animals, we find that the differences observable in their structure have a reference to their way of life, and the habits for which they are destined; so that, from knowing the latter, we might be able, in particular cases, to frame conjectures *a priori* concerning the former.

270. From the foregoing hints it sufficiently appears, that Design may be inferred from its effects; and also, that design may be traced, in various parts of the universe, from an actual examination of the means employed to accomplish particular ends. Another inquiry, however, and a still more important, remains,—to consider the characters of this design, as it is displayed in the universe; or, in other words, to consider how far the design seems to indicate Wisdom; and whether it seems to operate in conformity to One uniform plan. The first investigation is useful, by its tendency to elevate our conceptions of the Supreme Being; and the second is necessary for the demonstration of his Unity.

271. The study of philosophy, in all its various branches, both natural and moral, affords, at every step, a new illustration of the subject to which these investigations relate; insomuch that the truths of natural religion gain an accession of evidence from every addition that is made to the stock of human knowledge. Hence, in the case of those individuals who devote themselves, with fair and candid minds, to the pursuits of science, there is a gradual progress of light and conviction, keeping pace with the enlargement of their information and of their views; and hence, a strong presumption that the influence which these truths have, even in the present state of society, on the minds of the multitude, will continually increase, in proportion as the order of the material universe shall be more fully

displayed by the discoveries of philosophy, and as the plan of Providence in the administration of human affairs shall be more completely unfolded in the future history of our species.[1]

272. In considering the universe, with a view to the illustration of the wisdom and unity of God, it is, in a peculiar degree, satisfactory to trace the *relations* which different parts of it bear to each other, and to remark the concurrence of things apparently unconnected and even remote, in promoting the same benevolent purposes. The following hints may be of use in suggesting reflections on this subject.

(1.) The adaptation of the bodies and of the instincts of animals to the laws of the material world:—Of the organs of respiration, for example, and of the instinct of suction, to the properties of the atmosphere;[2]—of the *momentum* of light to the sensibility of the retina;—of the fabric of the eye to the laws of refraction;—of the size and strength of animals and vegetables to the laws of gravitation and of cohesion.[3]

(2.) The adaptation of the bodies and of the instincts of animals to those particular climates and districts of the earth for which they are destined.

(3.) The relations subsisting between particular animals and particular vegetables; the latter furnishing to the former salutary food in their healthful state, and useful remedies in the case of disease.

(4.) The connexion which appears, from the pneumatical discoveries of modern chemistry, to exist between the processes of nature in the animal and in the vegetable kingdoms.—[I allude to the effect of vegetables in restoring the salubrity of the atmosphere, vitiated by the breaths of animals and other causes; and the nourishment they themselves receive in the administration of this remedy.]—1*st edit.*

(5.) The relations which different tribes of animals bear to each other,—one tribe being the natural prey of another, and

[1] ["Hæc et cætera hujusmodi latent in pandectis ævi sequentis, non antea discenda quam librum hunc Deus arbiter sæculorum, recluserit mortalibus."—Kepler, *Epit. Astron.*]—1*st edition*, B.

[2] [Paley, p. 279.]—2*d edit.*

[3] [Rumford, Vol. II. p. 289.]—1*st edit.*

each of them having their instruments of offence or defence provided accordingly.

(6.) The relations which the periodical instincts of migrating animals bear to the state of the season, and to the vegetable productions of distant parts of the globe.[1]

273. This view of the subject is peculiarly striking when we consider the relations which subsist between the nature of man and the circumstances of his external situation. An examination of his perceptive faculties in particular, and of his intellectual powers as they are adapted to the structure and to the laws of the material world, opens a wide field of curious speculation.

274. The accommodation of the objects around him to his appetites, to his physical wants, and to his capacities of enjoyment, is no less wonderful; and exceeds so far what we observe in the case of other animals, as to authorize us to conclude, that it was chiefly with a view to his happiness and improvement that the arrangements of this lower world were made.

275. There is another view of nature which tends remarkably to illustrate that unity of design which is the foundation of our belief of the unity of God;—to trace the analogies which are observable between the different departments of the universe which fall under our notice. Of such analogies many instances may be derived from a comparative examination—1. Of the structures of different tribes of animals; 2. Of the animal and of the vegetable kingdoms; and 3. Of the various laws which regulate the phenomena of the material world.

276. It is pleasing to consider, that this uniform and regular plan has been found to extend to the remotest limits to which the inquiries of philosophers have reached. The ancients, in general, supposed that the phenomena of the heavens were regulated by laws perfectly unlike those which obtain within the circle of our experience. The modern discoveries have shewn how widely they were mistaken; and, indeed, it was a conjecture *a priori* that their ideas on this subject might perhaps be erroneous, which led the way to the theory of gravitation. Every subsequent discovery has confirmed the conjecture.

[1] [Ray, p. 128.]—*2d edit.*

277. Nor is it only the more general laws of terrestrial bodies, which extend to the remote parts of the universe. There is some ground for suspecting that the particular arrangements of things on the surfaces of the different planets, are not wholly unlike those which we observe on our own.

278. Amusing and interesting as these physical speculations may be, it is still more delightful to trace the uniformity of design which is displayed in the *moral* world ;—to compare the arts of human life with the instincts of the brutes ;* and the instincts of the different tribes of brutes with each other ; and to remark, amidst the astonishing variety of means which are employed to accomplish the same ends, a certain analogy characterize them all ;—or to observe, in the minds of different individuals of our own species, the workings of the same affections and passions, and to trace the uniformity of their operation in men of different ages and countries. It is this which gives the great charm to what we call *nature* in epic and dramatic composition, when the poet speaks a language to which every heart is an echo, and which, amidst all the effects of education and fashion in modifying and disguising the principles of our constitution, reminds all the various classes of readers or of spectators, of the existence of those moral ties which unite us to each other and to our common Parent.

279. Before leaving this subject, it is proper to remark, that the metaphysical reasonings which have been occasionally employed in illustration of it, ought not to be considered as forming any part of the argument for the existence of God, which (as was already observed) is an immediate and necessary consequence of the two principles formerly mentioned, (§ 251.) The scope of these reasonings is not to confirm the truth of the proposition, but to obviate the sceptical cavils which have been urged against it.

280. Reasoning and reflection are indeed necessary to raise the mind to worthy conceptions of the Divine attributes, and to cure it of those prejudices which arise from limited and

* [The clause formerly stood, "to compare the instincts of men with those of the brutes;"—the correction is in manuscript on the margin of 2d edit.]

erroneous views of nature. While men confine their attention to detached and insulated appearances, Polytheism offers itself as the most natural creed, and it is only by slow and gradual steps that philosophy discovers to us those magnificent views of the universe which connect together all events, both physical and moral, as parts of *one* system, and conspiring to *one* end.

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281. Besides the sceptical objections already mentioned, to the speculation concerning Final Causes, some others have been proposed with very different views. Descartes, in particular taking for granted the existence of God, as sufficiently established by other proofs, has rejected altogether this speculation from philosophy, as an impious and absurd attempt to penetrate into the designs of Providence. Some observations, much to the same purpose, occur in the works of Maupertuis and of Buffon.—To this class of objections against Final Causes, a satisfactory answer is given by Mr. Boyle, in an essay written expressly on the subject.*

282. The authority of Lord Bacon has been frequently quoted in support of the opinion of these French philosophers.† But if his writings be carefully examined, it will be found that the censures he bestows on Aristotle and his followers for their conjectures concerning the ends and intentions of Nature, are applicable only to the abuse of this doctrine in the Peripatetic school. It is a doctrine, according to him, which belongs properly to metaphysics, or to natural theology, and not to natural philosophy; and which contributed much to mislead the Peripatetics in their physical inquiries. In a work of which it was the principal aim to explain the true plan of philosophical investigation, it was necessary to point out the absurdity of blending physical and final causes together, and of substituting conjectures concerning the intentions of nature, for an account of her operations. Perhaps it was prudent even to recommend the total exclusion of such conjectures from physics, in an age

* [*On Final Causes.*] in *Elements*, &c., Vol. II. pp. 298, 335-349; Vol. III. p. 268, *seq.*]

† [See this whole subject discussed

when the just rules of inquiry were so imperfectly understood. —That Bacon did not mean to censure the speculation about Final Causes, when confined to its proper place, and applied to its proper purpose, appears clearly from a variety of particular passages, as well as from the general strain and tendency of his writings.

283. In the present age, when the true method of philosophizing in physics is pretty generally understood, it does not seem to be so necessary as formerly to banish Final Causes from that Branch of Science; provided always they be kept distinct from Physical Causes, with which there is now but little danger of their being unwarily confounded. If this caution be attended to, the consideration of Final Causes, so far from leading us astray, may frequently be of use in guiding our researches. It is, in fact, a mode of reasoning familiar to every philosopher, whatever his speculative opinions on the subject of natural religion may be. Thus, in the study of anatomy, every man proceeds on the maxim that nothing in the body of an animal was made in vain; and when he meets with a part of which the use is not obvious, he feels himself dissatisfied, till he discovers some, at least, of the purposes to which it is subservient. "I remember (says Mr. Boyle) that, when I asked our famous Harvey what were the things that induced him to think of a circulation of the blood; he answered me, that when he took notice that the valves in the veins of so many parts of the body were so placed that they gave a free passage to the blood towards the heart, but opposed the passage of the venal blood the contrary way; he was invited to imagine, that so provident a cause as Nature had not placed so many valves without design; and no design seemed more probable, than that, since the blood could not well, because of the interposing valves, be sent by the veins to the limbs, it should be sent through the arteries, and return through the veins, whose valves did not oppose its course that way."*

* [Boyle's *Works*, Vol. IV. p. 539, folio edition. See above, *Elements*, Vol. II p. 341.]

284. An explanation of the use and abuse of the speculation concerning Final Causes, in the study of natural philosophy, is still a *desideratum* in science, and would form an important addition to that branch of logic, which professes to state the rules of philosophical investigation.

ARTICLE SECOND.—OF THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY.

285. The observations made in the last Article contain some of the principal heads of the argument for the existence of God; and also for his unity, for his power, and for his wisdom. Of the two last of these attributes, we justly say that they are *infinite;* that is, that our imagination can set no bounds to them, and that our conceptions of them always rise, in proportion as our faculties are cultivated, and as our knowledge of the universe becomes more extensive. The writers on Natural Religion commonly give a particular enumeration of attributes, which they divide into the *natural*, the *intellectual*, and the *moral;* [comprehending under the first head, the unity of the Deity, his self-existence, his spirituality, his eternity; under the second, his knowledge and his wisdom; and under the third, his justice and his goodness;*] and of all these attributes they treat at length in a systematical manner. This view of the subject, whatever may be its advantages, could not be adopted with propriety here. The remarks which follow are confined to the evidences of the Divine *goodness* and *justice;*—those attributes which constitute the *moral* perfection of the Deity, and which render him a proper object of religious worship.

I. OF THE EVIDENCES OF BENEVOLENT DESIGN IN THE UNIVERSE.

286. Our ideas of the moral attributes of God muat be derived from our own moral perceptions. It is only by attending to these, that we can form a conception of what his attributes are; and it is in this way we are furnished with the strongest proofs that they really belong to him.

* [*1st edit.* A *and* B, *and 2d edit.*]

287. The peculiar sentiment of approbation with which we regard the virtue of beneficence in others, and the peculiar satisfaction with which we reflect on such of our own actions as have contributed to the happiness of mankind, to which we may add the exquisite pleasure accompanying the exercise of all the kind affections, naturally lead us to consider benevolence or goodness as the supreme attribute of the Deity. It is difficult, indeed, to conceive what other motive could have induced a Being, completely and independently happy, to have called his creatures into existence.

288. In this manner, without any examination of the fact, we have a strong presumption for the goodness of the Deity; and it is only after establishing this presumption *a priori*, that we can proceed to examine the fact with safety. It is true, indeed, that, independently of this presumption, the disorders we see would not demonstrate ill intention in the Author of the universe; as it would be still possible that these might contribute to the happiness and the perfection of the whole system. But the contrary supposition would be equally possible; that there is nothing absolutely good in the universe, and that the communication of suffering is the ultimate end of the laws by which it is governed.

289. The argument for the goodness of God, derived from our own moral constitution, and strengthened by the consideration of our ignorance of the plans of Providence, affords an answer to all the objections which have been urged against this attribute of the Deity. And the answer is conclusive, whatever the state of the fact may be with respect to the magnitude of the evils of which we complain.

290. But although this answer might silence our objections, something more is requisite, on a subject so momentous, to support our confidence, and to animate our hopes. If no account could be given of the evils of life, but that they may possibly be good relatively to the whole universe;—still more, if it should appear that the sufferings of life overbalance its enjoyments; it could hardly be expected, that any speculative reasoning would have much effect in banishing the melancholy

suggestions of scepticism.—We are therefore naturally led, in the first place, to inquire, whether some explanation may not be given of the origin of evil, from a consideration of the facts which fall under our notice? and, secondly, to compare together the happiness and the misery which the world exhibits.

291. The question concerning the *origin of evil* has, from the earliest times, employed the ingenuity of speculative men: and various theories have been proposed to solve the difficulty. The most celebrated of these are the following:—

(1.) The doctrine of Preëxistence.

(2.) The doctrine of the Manicheans.

(3.) The doctrine of Optimism.

292. According to the first hypothesis, the evils we suffer at present are punishments and expiations of moral delinquencies committed in a former stage of our being. This hypothesis, it is obvious, (to mention no other objection,) only removes the difficulty a little out of sight, without affording any explanation of it.

293. The Manicheans account for the mixture of good and evil in the universe, by the opposite agencies of two coëternal and independent principles. Their doctrine has been examined and refuted by many authors, by reasonings *a priori;* but the most satisfactory of all refutations is its obvious inconsistency with that unity of design which is everywhere conspicuous in nature.

294. The fundamental principle of the Optimists is, that all events are ordered for the best; and that the evils which we suffer are parts of a great system conducted by almighty power, under the direction of infinite wisdom and goodness.

295. Under this general title, however, are comprehended two very different descriptions of Philosophers—those who admit, and those who deny, the Freedom of human actions. The former only contend, that everything is right, so far as it is the work of God; and endeavour to shew that the creation of beings endowed with Free-will, and consequently liable to moral delinquency,—and the government of the world by general laws, from which occasional evils must result,—furnish

no solid objection to the perfection of the universe. But they hold, at the same time, that, although the permission of moral evil does not detract from the goodness of God, it is nevertheless imputable to man as a fault, and renders him justly obnoxious to punishment. This was the system of Plato, and of the best of the ancient philosophers, who, in most instances, state their doctrine in a manner perfectly consistent with man's free-will and moral agency.

296. By some modern authors, the scheme of Optimism has been proposed in a form inconsistent with these suppositions, and which leads to a justification of moral evil, even with respect to the delinquent.

297. It is of great importance to attend to the distinction between these two systems, because it is customary among sceptical writers to confound them studiously together, in order to extend to both, that ridicule to which the latter is justly entitled. The scope of the argument, as stated in the former system, may be collected from the following hints.

298. All the different subjects of human complaint may be reduced to two classes—Moral and Physical evils. The former comprehends those which arise from the abuse of Free-will; the latter, those which result from the established laws of nature, and which man cannot prevent by his own efforts.

299. According to the definition now given of moral evil, the question with respect to its permission is reduced to this: Why was man made a free agent? A question to which it seems to be a sufficient reply: That perhaps the object of the Deity, in the government of the world, is not merely to communicate happiness, but to form his creatures to moral excellence; or that the enjoyment of high degrees of happiness may perhaps necessarily require the previous acquisition of virtuous habits.

300. The sufferings produced by vice are, on this supposition, instances of the goodness of God, no less than the happiness resulting from virtue.

301. These observations justify Providence, not only for the permission of moral evil, but for the permission of many things

which we commonly complain of as physical evils. How great is the proportion of these, which are the obvious consequences of our vices and our prejudices; and which, so far from being a necessary part of the order of nature, seem intended to operate in the progress of human affairs, as a gradual remedy against the causes which produce them!

302. Some of our other complaints with respect to the lot of humanity will be found, on examination, to arise from partial views of the constitution of man, and from a want of attention to the circumstances which constitute his happiness, or promote his improvement.

303. Still, however, many evils remain, to which the foregoing principles do not apply. Such are those produced by what we commonly call the accidents of life: accidents from which no state of society, how perfect soever, can possibly be exempted; and which, if they be subservient to any benevolent purposes, contribute to none within the sphere of our knowledge.

304. Of this class of physical evils, the explanation must be derived from the general laws by which the government of the Deity appears to be conducted. The tendency of these laws will be found, in every instance, favourable to order and to happiness; and it is one of the noblest employments of philosophy to investigate the beneficent purposes to which they are subservient. In a world, however, which is thus governed, and where the inhabitants are free agents, occasional inconveniences and misfortunes must unavoidably be incurred.

305. In the meantime, from this influence of "Time and Chance" on human affairs, salutary effects arise. Virtue is rendered disinterested, and the characters of men are more completely displayed.

306. Many of our moral qualities, too, are the result of habits which imply the existence of physical evils. Patience, Fortitude, Humanity, all suppose a scene, in which sufferings are to be endured, in our own case; or relieved, in the case of others.

307. Thus it appears, not only that partial evils *may*

be good with respect to the whole system; but that their tendency *is* beneficial on the whole, even to that small part of it which we see.

308. The argument for the goodness of God, which arises from the foregoing considerations, will be much strengthened, if it shall appear farther, that the sum of happiness in human life far exceeds the sum of misery.

309. In opposition to this conclusion, the prevalence of moral evil over moral good, in the characters of men, has been insisted on by many writers; and in proof of it, an appeal has been made to the catalogue of crimes which sully the history of past ages.

310. Whatever opinion we may adopt, with respect to the state of the fact, in this particular instance, no objection can be drawn from it to the foregoing reasonings; for moral evil is alone imputable to the being by whom it is committed. There is, however, no necessity for having recourse to this evasion. Corrupted as mankind are, the proportion of human life which is spent in vice, is inconsiderable when compared with the whole of its extent. History itself is a proof of this; for the events it records are chiefly those which are calculated, by their singularity, to engage the curiosity, and to interest the passions of the reader. In computing, besides, the moral demerit of mankind, from their external actions, a large allowance ought to be made for erroneous speculative opinions; for false conceptiόns of facts; for prejudices inspired by the influence of prevailing manners; and for habits contracted insensibly in early infancy.

311. With respect to the balance of physical evil and physical good, the argument is still clearer; if it be acknowledged, (§ 304,) that the general laws of nature are beneficent in their tendency, and that the inconveniences which arise from them are only occasional.

312. Of these occasional evils, too, no inconsiderable part may be traced to the obstacles which human institutions oppose to the order of things recommended by nature. How chimerical soever the speculations of philosophers concerning the per-

fection of legislation may be, they are useful, at least, in illustrating the wisdom and goodness of the Divine government.

313. Nor is it only in those laws which regulate the more essential interests of mankind, that a beneficent intention may be traced. What a rich provision is made for our enjoyment in the pleasures of the understanding, of the imagination, and of the heart! and how little do they depend on the caprice of fortune! The positive accommodation of our sensitive powers to the scene we occupy, is still more wonderful: Of the organ of smell, for example, to the perfumes of the vegetable world; of the taste, to the endless profusion of luxuries which the earth, the air, and the waters afford; of the ear, to the melodies of the birds; of the eye, to all the beauties and glories of the visible creation.

314. Among these marks of beneficence in the frame of man, the constitution of his mind, with respect to Habits, must not be omitted. So great is their influence, that there is hardly any situation to which his wishes may not be gradually reconciled; nay, where he will not find himself, in time, more comfortable, than in those which are looked up to with envy by the bulk of mankind. By this power of accommodation to external circumstances, a remedy is, in part, provided for the occasional evils resulting from the operation of general laws.

315. In judging of the feelings of those who are placed in situations very different from our own, due allowances are seldom made for the effects of habit; and, of consequence, our estimates of the happiness of life fall short greatly of the truth.[1]

[1] ["Omnes considera gentes, in quibus Romana pax desinit: Germanos dico, et quicquid circa Istrum vagarum gentium occursat. Perpetuo illos hiems, triste cœlum premit maligne solum sterile sustentat, imbrem culmo aut fronde defendunt, super durata glacie stagna persultant, in alimentum feras captant. Miseri tibi videntur? nihil miserum est, quod in naturam consuetudo perduxit: paullatim enim voluptati sunt, quæ necessitate cœperunt. . . Hoc quod tibi calamitas videtur, tot gentium vita est."—Seneca, *De Providentia*, c. iv.]—*2d edit.*

II. OF THE EVIDENCES OF THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF THE DEITY.

316. It was before remarked, (§ 286,) that as our first ideas of the moral attributes of God are derived from our own moral perceptions, so it is from the consideration of these that the strongest proofs of his attributes arise.

317. The distinction between Right and Wrong, as was formerly observed, (§ 200,) is apprehended by the mind to be eternal and immutable, no less than the distinction between mathematical Truth and Falsehood. To argue, therefore, from our own moral judgments, to the administration of the Deity, cannot be justly censured as a rash extension, to the Divine nature, of suggestions resulting from the arbitrary constitution of our own minds.

318. The power we have of conceiving this distinction, is one of the most remarkable of those which raise us above the brutes; and the sense of obligation which it involves, possesses a distinguished pre-eminence over all our other principles of action, (§ 219.) To act in conformity to our sense of rectitude, is plainly the highest excellence which our nature is capable of attaining; nor can we avoid extending the same rule of estimation to all intelligent beings whatever.

319. Besides these conclusions, with respect to the divine attributes, (which seem to be implied in our very perception of moral distinctions,) there are others perfectly agreeable to them, which continually force themselves on the mind, in the exercise of our moral judgments, both with respect to our own conduct and that of other men. The reverence, which we feel to be due to the admonitions of Conscience; the sense of merit and demerit, which accompanies our good and bad actions; the warm interest we take in the fortunes of the virtuous; the indignation we feel at the occasional triumphs of successful villany;—all imply a secret conviction of the moral administration of the universe.

320. An examination of the ordinary course of human affairs adds to the force of these considerations; and furnishes a proof

from the fact, that, notwithstanding the seemingly promiscuous distribution of happiness and misery in this life, the reward of virtue, and the punishment of vice, are the great objects of all the general laws by which the world is governed. The disorders, in the meantime, which, in such a world as ours, cannot fail to arise in particular instances, when they are compared with our natural sense of good and of ill desert, afford a presumption, that in a future state the moral government which we see begun here, will be carried into complete execution.

ARTICLE THIRD.—OF A FUTURE STATE.

321. The consideration of the Divine attributes naturally leads our thoughts to the sequel of that plan of moral administration, which may be traced distinctly amidst all the apparent disorders of our present condition; and which our own moral constitution, joined to our conclusions concerning the perfections of God, afford us the strongest intimations, will be more completely unfolded in some subsequent stage of our being. The doctrine, indeed, of a future state seems to be, in a great measure, implied in every system of religious belief; for why were we rendered capable of elevating our thoughts to the Deity, if all our hopes are to terminate here? or why were we furnished with powers which range through the infinity of space and of time, if our lot is to be the same with that of the beasts which perish?—But although the doctrine of a future state be implied in every scheme of religion, the truths of religion are not necessarily implied in the doctrine of a future state. Even absolute Atheism does not destroy all the arguments for the immortality of the soul. Whether it be owing to an over-ruling intelligence or not, it is a *fact* which no man can deny, that there are general laws which regulate the course of human affairs, and that, even in this world, we see manifest indications of a connexion between virtue and happiness.—Why may not *necessity* continue that existence it at first gave birth to? and why may not the connexion between virtue and happiness subsist for ever?

I. OF THE ARGUMENT FOR A FUTURE STATE DERIVED FROM THE NATURE OF MIND.

322. In collecting the various evidences which the light of nature affords for a future state, too much stress has commonly been laid upon the soul's Immateriality. The proper use of that doctrine is not to demonstrate that the soul is physically and necessarily immortal; but to refute the objections which have been urged against the possibility of its existing in a separate state from the body. Although our knowledge of the nature of Mind may not be sufficient to afford us any positive argument on this subject; yet, even if it can be shown, that the dissolution of the body does not necessarily infer the extinction of the soul; and still more, if it can be shown, that the presumption is in favour of the contrary supposition, the moral proofs of a future retribution will meet with a more easy reception, when the doctrine is freed from the metaphysical difficulties which it has been apprehended to involve.

323. It was before remarked, (Part I. § 28,) that our notions both of body and mind are merely relative; that we know the one only by its sensible qualities, and the other by the operations of which we are conscious.—To say, therefore, of Mind, that it is not material, is to affirm a proposition, the truth of which is involved in the only conceptions of Matter and of Mind that we are capable of forming.

324. The doubts that have been suggested, with respect to the essential distinction between Matter and Mind, derive all their plausibility from the habits of inattention we acquire in early infancy to our mental operations. It was plainly the intention of Nature, that our thoughts should be habitually directed to things external; and, accordingly, the bulk of mankind are not only indisposed to study the intellectual phenomena, but are incapable of that degree of reflection which is necessary for their examination. Hence it is, that when we begin to analyze our own internal constitution, we find the facts it presents to us so very intimately associated in our conceptions with the qualities of Matter, that it is impossible for

us to draw distinctly and steadily the line between them; and that when Mind and Matter are concerned in the same event, the former is either entirely overlooked, or is regarded only as an accessory principle, dependent for its existence on the latter. —The tendency which all men have to refer the sensation of colour to the objects by which it is excited, may serve to illustrate the manner in which the qualities of mind and body come to be blended in our apprehensions.

325. If these remarks be well founded, the prejudices which give support to the scheme of Materialism, are not likely to be cured by any metaphysical reasonings, how clear and conclusive soever, so long as the judgment continues to be warped by such obstinate associations as have just been mentioned. A habit of reflecting on the laws of thought, as they are to be collected from our own consciousness, together with a habit of resisting those illusions of the fancy, which lead superficial inquirers to substitute analogies for facts, will gradually enable us to make the phenomena of Matter and those of Mind distinct objects of attention; and, as soon as this happens, the absurdity of Materialism must appear intuitively obvious.

326. It is entirely owing to our early familiarity with material objects, and our early habits of inattention to what passes within us, that Materialism is apt to appear at first sight to be less absurd than the opposite system, which represents *Mind* as the only existence in the universe. Of the two doctrines, that of Berkeley is at once the safest and the most philosophical; not only as it contradicts merely the suggestions of our perceptions, while the other contradicts the suggestions of our consciousness; but as various plausible arguments may be urged in its favour, from the phenomena of dreaming; whereas no instance can be mentioned in which sensation and intelligence appear to result from any combination of the particles of Matter.

327. Besides the evidences for the existence of Mind, which our own consciousness affords, and those which are exhibited by other men, and by the lower animals, there are many presented to us by every part of the material world. We are so

constituted, that every change in it we see suggests to us the notion of an efficient cause; and every combination of means conspiring to an end suggests to us the notion of intelligence. And accordingly, the various changes which take place in nature, and the order and beauty of the universe, have in every age been regarded as the effects of power and wisdom; that is, of the operation of Mind. In the material world, therefore, as well as in the case of animated nature, we are led to conceive Body as a passive subject, and Mind as the moving and governing agent. And it deserves attention, that, in the former class of phenomena, Mind appears to move and arrange the parts of Matter, without being united with it, as in the case of animal life.

328. There are various circumstances which render it highly probable that the union between soul and body which takes place in our present state, so far from being essential to the exercise of our powers and faculties, was intended to limit the sphere of our information, and to prevent us from acquiring, in this early stage of our being, too clear a view of the constitution and government of the universe. Indeed, when we reflect on the difference between the operations of Mind and the qualities of Matter, it appears much more wonderful that the two substances should be so intimately united as we find them actually to be, than to suppose that the former may exist in a conscious and intelligent state when separated from the latter.

329. The most plausible objections, nevertheless, to the doctrine of a future state, have been drawn from the intimacy of this union. From the effects of intoxication, madness, and other diseases, it appears that a certain condition of the body is necessary to the intellectual operations; and, in the case of old men, it is generally found that a decline of the faculties keeps pace with the decay of bodily health and vigour. The few exceptions that occur to the universality of this fact, only prove that there are some diseases fatal to life which do not injure those parts of the body with which the intellectual operations are more immediately connected.

330. The reply which Cicero has made to these objections is

equally ingenious and solid. "Suppose a person to have been educated from his infancy in a chamber where he enjoyed no opportunity of seeing external objects but through a small chink in the window-shutter, would he not be apt to consider this chink as essential to his vision, and would it not be difficult to persuade him that his prospects would be enlarged by demolishing the walls of his prison?"* Admitting that this analogy is founded merely on fancy; yet if it be granted that there is no absurdity in the supposition, it furnishes a sufficient answer to all the reasonings which have been stated against the possibility of the soul's separate existence, from the consideration of its present union with the body.

331. In support of the foregoing conclusions, many strong arguments might be derived from an accurate examination and analysis of our ideas of Matter and its qualities. But such speculations could not be rendered intelligible without a previous explanation of some principles too abstruse to be introduced here.

II. OF THE EVIDENCES FOR A FUTURE STATE, ARISING FROM THE HUMAN CONSTITUTION, AND FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH MAN IS PLACED.

332. The great extent of this subject necessarily confines the following remarks to an enumeration of the principal heads of the argument. These are stated without any illustration.

(1.) The natural desire of immortality; and the anticipations of futurity inspired by hope.

(2.) The natural apprehensions of the mind when under the influence of remorse.

(3.) The exact accommodation of the condition of the lower animals to their instincts and to their sensitive powers,—contrasted with the unsuitableness of the present state of things to the intellectual faculties of man,—to his capacities of enjoyment,—and to the conceptions of happiness and of perfection which he is able to form.

* [See *Tuscul. Disput.* Lib. I. c. xx.]

(4.) The foundation which is laid in the principles of our constitution for a progressive and an unlimited improvement.

(5.) The information we are rendered capable of acquiring concerning the more remote parts of the universe, the unlimited range which is opened to the human imagination through the immensity of space and of time, and the ideas, however imperfect, which philosophy affords us of the existence and attributes of an over-ruling Mind:—acquisitions for which an obvious final cause may be traced on the supposition of a future state, but which, if that supposition be rejected, could have no other effect than to make the business of life appear unworthy of our regard.

(6.) The tendency of the infirmities of age, and of the pains of disease, to strengthen and confirm our moral habits; and the difficulty of accounting, upon the hypothesis of annihilation, for those sufferings which commonly put a period to the existence of man.

(7.) The discordance between our moral judgments and feelings, and the course of human affairs.

(8.) The analogy of the material world, in some parts of which the most complete and the most systematical order may be traced, and of which our views always become the more satisfactory, the wider our knowledge extends. It is the supposition of a future state alone that can furnish a key to the present disorders of the moral world; and without it, many of the most striking phenomena of human life must remain for ever inexplicable.

(9.) The inconsistency of supposing that the moral laws which regulate the course of human affairs have no reference to anything beyond the limits of the present scene, when all the bodies which compose the visible universe appear to be related to each other as parts of one great physical system.

333. Of the different considerations now mentioned, there is not one, perhaps, which, taken singly, would be sufficient to establish the truth they are brought to prove; but taken in conjunction, their force appears irresistible. They not only all terminate in the same conclusion, but they mutually reflect

light on each other; and they have that sort of consistency and connexion among themselves, which could hardly be supposed to take place among a series of false propositions.

334. The same remark may be extended to the other principles of Natural Religion. They all hang together in such a manner, that, if one of them be granted, it facilitates the way for the reception of the rest.

335. Nor is it merely with each other that these principles are connected. They have a relation to all the other principles of Moral Philosophy; insomuch, that a person who entertains just views of the one, never fails to entertain also just views of the other. Perhaps it would not be going too far to assert, that they have a relation to almost all the truths we know in the moral, the intellectual, and the material worlds. One thing is certain, that in proportion as our knowledge extends, our doubts and objections disappear, new light continually breaks in upon us from every quarter, and more of order and system appears in the universe.

336. It is a strong confirmation of these remarks, that the most important discoveries, both in moral and physical science, have been made by men friendly to the principles of natural religion; and that those writers who have affected to be sceptical on this last subject, have in general been paradoxical and sophistical in their other inquiries.—This consideration, while it illustrates the connexion which different classes of truth have with each other, proves, that it is to a mind well fitted for the discovery and reception of truth in general, that the evidences of Religion are the most satisfactory.

337. The influence which the belief of a future state has on the conduct and on the enjoyments of mankind, also tends to confirm its credibility. This is so remarkable, that it has led some to consider it merely as an invention of politicians, to preserve the good order of society, and to support the feeble mind under the sufferings of human life. But if it be allowed that it has really such a tendency, can it be supposed that the Author of the universe should have left consequences so very momentous to depend on the belief of a chimera, which was in

time to vanish before the light of philosophy? Is it not more probable, that the enlargement of our knowledge, to which we are so powerfully prompted by the principle of curiosity, will tend to increase, and not to diminish, the virtue and the happiness of mankind; and, instead of spreading a gloom over creation, and extinguishing the hopes which nature inspires, will gradually unfold to us, in the moral world, the same order and beauty we admire in the material?

CONTINUATION AND CONCLUSION OF THE SECTION OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT THE DEITY.

338. After the view which has been given of the principles of Natural Religion, little remains to be added concerning the duties which respect the Deity. To employ our faculties in studying those evidences of power, of wisdom, and of goodness, which he has displayed in his works; as it is the foundation, in other instances, of our sense of religious obligation, so it is, in itself, a duty incumbent on us, as reasonable and moral beings, capable of recognising the existence of an Almighty cause, and of feeling corresponding sentiments of devotion. By those who entertain just opinions on this most important of all subjects, the following practical consequences, which comprehend some of the chief effects of religion on the temper and conduct, will be readily admitted as self-evident propositions.

339. In the first place: If the Deity be possessed of infinite moral excellence, we must feel towards him, in an infinite degree, all those affections of love, gratitude, and confidence, which are excited by the imperfect worth we observe among our fellow-creatures; for it is by conceiving all that is benevolent and amiable in man, raised to the highest perfection, that we can alone form some faint notion of the Divine nature. To cultivate, therefore, an habitual love and reverence of the Supreme Being, may be justly considered as the first great branch of morality; nor is the virtue of that man complete, or even consistent with itself, in whose mind these sentiments of piety are wanting.

340. Secondly: Although religion can with no propriety be considered as the sole foundation of morality, yet when we are convinced that God is infinitely good, and that he is the friend and protector of virtue, this belief affords the most powerful inducements to the practice of every branch of our duty. It leads us to consider conscience as the vicegerent of God, and to attend to its suggestions, as to the commands of that Being from whom we have received our existence, and the great object of whose government is to promote the happiness and the perfection of his whole creation.

341. Thirdly: A regard to our own happiness in the future stages of our being (which will be afterwards shown to constitute a moral obligation) ought to conspire with the other motives already mentioned, in stimulating our virtuous exertions. The moral perceptions we have received from God, more particularly our sense of merit and demerit, may be considered as clear indications of future rewards and punishments, which, in due time, he will not fail to distribute. Religion is therefore a species of authoritative law, enforced by the most awful sanctions, and extending not merely to our actions, but to our thoughts. In the case of the lower orders of men, who are incapable of abstract speculation, and whose moral feelings cannot be supposed to have received much cultivation, it is chiefly this view of Religion, which is addressed to their hopes and fears, that secures a faithful discharge of their social duties.

342. In the last place: A sense of Religion, where it is sincere, will necessarily be attended with a complete resignation of our own will to that of the Deity; as it teaches us to regard every event, even the most afflicting, as calculated to promote beneficent purposes which we are unable to comprehend; and to promote finally the perfection and happiness of our own nature.

SECTION II.—OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT OUR FELLOW-CREATURES.

343. Under this title, it is not proposed to give a complete enumeration of our social duties, but only to point out some of

the most important; chiefly with a view to shew the imperfection of those systems of morals which attempt to resolve the whole of virtue into one particular principle. Among these, that which resolves virtue into Benevolence is undoubtedly the most amiable; but even this system will appear, from the following remarks, to be not only inconsistent with truth, but to lead to dangerous consequences.

ARTICLE FIRST.—OF BENEVOLENCE.

344. It has been supposed by some moralists, that benevolence is the only immediate object of moral approbation; and that the obligation of all our moral duties arises entirely from their apprehended tendency to promote the happiness of society.

345. Notwithstanding the various appearances in human nature, which seem at first view to favour this theory, it is liable to insurmountable objections. If the merit of an action depended on no other circumstance, than the quantity of good intended by the agent, it would follow, that the rectitude of an action could be, in no case, influenced by the mutual relations of the parties;—a conclusion directly contrary to the universal judgments of mankind, with respect to the obligations of Gratitude, of Veracity, and of Justice.[1]

346. Unless we admit these duties to be immediately obligatory, we must admit the maxim, that a good end may sanctify whatever means are necessary for its accomplishment; or, in other words, that it would be lawful for us to dispense with the obligations of gratitude, of veracity, and of justice, whenever, by doing so, we had a prospect of promoting any of the essential interests of society.

347. It may perhaps be urged, that a regard to utility would lead, in such cases, to an invariable adherence to general rules; because, in this way, more good is produced, on the whole, than could be obtained by any occasional deviations from them;—that it is this idea of utility which first leads us to approve of the different virtues, and that afterwards habit, and the asso-

[1] [Butler's *Dissertation on Virtue.*]—*1st and 2d editt.*

ciation of ideas, make us observe their rules, without thinking of consequences. But is not this to adopt that mode of reasoning which the patrons of the Benevolent system have censured so severely in those philosophers who have attempted to deduce all our actions from Self-love? and may not the arguments they have employed against their adversaries be retorted upon themselves?

348. That the practice of veracity and justice, and of all our other duties, is useful to mankind, is acknowledged by moralists of all descriptions; and there is good reason for believing, that if a person saw all the consequences of his actions, he would perceive that an adherence to their rules is useful and advantageous on the whole, even in those cases in which his limited views incline him to think otherwise. It is *possible*, that in the Deity, benevolence, or a regard to utility, may be the sole principle of action; and that the ultimate end for which he enjoined to his creatures the duties of veracity and justice, was to secure their own happiness; but still, with respect to man, they are indispensable laws; for he has an immediate perception of their rectitude. And, indeed, if he had not, but were left to deduce their rectitude from the consequences which they have a tendency to produce, it may be doubted if there would be enough of virtue left in the world to hold society together.

349. These remarks are applicable to a considerable variety of moral systems, which have been offered to the world under very different forms; but which agree with each other, in deriving the practical rules of virtuous conduct from considerations of Utility. All of these systems are but modifications of the old doctrine, which resolves the whole of virtue into Benevolence.

350. But although Benevolence does not constitute the whole of our duty, it must be acknowledged to be, not only one of its most important branches, but the object of a very peculiar and enthusiastic admiration. The plausibility of the systems, to which the preceding observations relate, is a sufficient proof of the rank it is universally understood to hold among the virtues.

351. It may be proper to add, that the Benevolence which is

an object of moral approbation, is a fixed and settled disposition to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures. It is peculiar to a rational nature, and is not to be confounded with those kind affections which are common to us with the brutes. These are subsidiary, in fact, to the principle of Benevolence; and they are always amiable qualities in a character: but, so far as they are constitutional, they are certainly in no respect meritorious. Where they are possessed in an eminent degree, we may perhaps consider them as a ground of moral esteem; because they indicate the pains which have been bestowed on their cultivation, and a course of active virtue in which they have been exercised and strengthened. A person, on the contrary, who wants them, is always an object of horror;—chiefly because we know, that they are only to be eradicated by long habits of profligacy; and partly in consequence of the uneasiness we feel, when we see the ordinary course of nature violated in any of her productions.

352. Some of the writers who resolve virtue into Benevolence, have not attended sufficiently to this consideration. They frequently speak of virtuous and vicious affections; whereas these epithets belong, not to affections, but to actions; or, still more properly, to the *dispositions* and *purposes* from which actions proceed.

353. Where a rational and settled Benevolence forms a part of a character, it will render the conduct perfectly uniform, and will exclude the possibility of those inconsistencies that are frequently observable in individuals who give themselves up to the guidance of particular affections, either private or public. In truth, all those offices, whether apparently trifling or important, by which the happiness of other men is affected,—Civility, Gentleness, Kindness, Humanity, Patriotism, Universal Benevolence,—are only diversified expressions of the same disposition, according to the circumstances in which it operates, and the relations which the agent bears to others.

ARTICLE SECOND.—OF JUSTICE.

354. The word Justice, in its most extensive signification, denotes that disposition which leads us, in cases where our own

temper, or passions, or interest, are concerned, to determine and to act, without being biassed by partial considerations.—[By some of the ancient philosophers, it was employed in a sense still *more* extensive,—to denote that disposition which prompts to a conduct morally conformable to *all the various* relations in which we are placed; in which acceptation it comprehends all the different branches of virtue. *This* use of the word occurs very seldom, if ever, among modern writers.]—2*d edit.*

355. In order to free our minds from the influence of these, experience teaches us either to recollect the judgments we have formerly passed, in similar circumstances, on the conduct of others; or to state cases to ourselves, in which we, and all our personal concerns, are left entirely out of the question.

356. But although expedients of this sort are necessary to the best of men, for correcting their moral judgments upon questions in which they themselves are parties, it will not therefore follow, (as some have supposed,[1]) that our only ideas of right and wrong, with respect to our own conduct, are derived from our sentiments with respect to the conduct of others. The intention of such expedients is merely to obtain a just and fair view of the circumstances; and after this view has been obtained, the question still remains, what constitutes the obligation upon us to act in a particular manner? For it is of great consequence to remark, that when we have once satisfied ourselves with respect to the conduct which an impartial judge would approve of, we feel that this conduct is *right* for us, and that we are under a moral obligation to act accordingly. If we had had recourse to no expedient for correcting our first judgment, we should still have formed some judgment or other, of a particular conduct, as right, wrong, or indifferent; and the only difference would have been, that we should probably have decided erroneously, from a false or a partial view of the case.

357. As it would be endless to attempt to point out all the

[1] See Mr. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, [Parts I. II. III. Also Mr. Stewart's *Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, LL.D.*, Sect. II.—*Ed.*]

various forms in which the disposition of Justice may display itself in life, it is necessary to confine our attention to a few of its more important effects. These may be arranged under two heads, according as it operates,—1*st*, In restraining the partialities of the temper and of the passions; and, 2*d*, In restraining the partialities of selfishness, where a competition takes place between our interests and those of other men. These two modifications of Justice may be distinguished from each other, by calling the first *Candour*, and the second *Uprightness*, or *Integrity*.

I. OF CANDOUR.

358. This disposition may be considered in three points of view; as it is displayed—

(1.) In judging of the talents of others.

(2.) In judging of their intentions.

(3.) In controversy.

359. The difficulty of estimating candidly the Talents of other men, arises in a great measure from the tendency of emulation to degenerate into envy. Notwithstanding the reality of the theoretical distinction between these dispositions of mind, (§ 139,) it is certain, that in practice nothing is more arduous than to realize it completely, and to check that self-partiality, which, while it leads us to dwell on our own personal advantages, and to magnify them in our own estimation, prevents us either from attending sufficiently to the merits of others, or from viewing them in the most favourable light. Of all this a good man will soon be satisfied from his own experience; and he will endeavour to guard against it as far as he is able, by judging of the pretensions of a rival, or even of an enemy, as he would have done if there had been no interference between his claims and theirs. In other words, he will endeavour to do Justice to their merits; and to bring himself, if possible, to love and to honour that genius and ability which have eclipsed his own. Nor will he retire in disgust from the race, because he has been outstripped by others, but will redouble all his exertions in the service of mankind; recollecting,

that if nature has been more partial to others than to him in her intellectual gifts, she has left open to all the theatre of Virtue; where the merits of individuals are determined, not by their actual attainments, but by the use and improvement they make of those advantages which their situation has afforded them.

360. Candour in judging of the Intentions of others, is a disposition of still greater importance. Several considerations were formerly suggested (§ 310) which render it highly probable, that there is much less vice or criminal intention in the world than is commonly imagined; and that the greater part of the disputes among mankind arise from mutual mistake or misapprehension. It is but an instance, then, of that Justice we owe to others, to make the most candid allowances for their apparent deviations, and to give every action the most favourable construction it can possibly admit of. Such a temper, while it renders a man respectable and amiable in society, contributes, perhaps, more than any other circumstance, to his private happiness.

361. Candour in controversy implies a strong sense of Justice, united to a disinterested love of Truth; two qualities which are so nearly allied that they can scarcely be supposed to exist separately. The latter guards the mind against error in its solitary speculations; the former imposes an additional check, when the irritation of dispute disturbs the cool exercise of the understanding. Where they are thus displayed in their joint effect, they evince the purity of that moral rectitude in which the essence of both consists; but so rarely is this combination exhibited in human life, even in the character of those who maintain the fairest reputation for Justice and for Veracity, as to warrant the conclusion, that these virtues (so effectually secured to a certain extent by compulsory law, or by public opinion) are, in a moral view, of fully as difficult attainment as any of the others.

362. The foregoing illustrations are stated at some length, in order to correct those partial definitions of Justice, which restrict its province to a rigorous observance of the rules of

Integrity or Honesty, in our dealings with our fellow-creatures. So far as this last disposition proceeds from a sense of duty, uninfluenced by human laws, it coincides exactly with that branch of Virtue which has been now described under the title of Candour.

II. OF UPRIGHTNESS OR INTEGRITY.

363. These words are commonly employed to express that disposition of mind which leads us to observe the rules of Justice in cases where our interest is supposed to interfere with the rights of other men; [or, in other words, which leads us to do *voluntarily*, whatever we can be justly *forced to do*, by the magistrate,]—2*d edit.*; a branch of Justice so important, that it has in a great measure appropriated the name to itself.[1] The observations made by Mr. Hume* and Mr. Smith† on the differences between Justice and the other virtues, apply only to this last branch of it; and it is this branch which properly forms the subject of that part of Ethics which is called Natural Jurisprudence. In the remaining paragraphs of this article, when the word Justice occurs, it is to be understood in the limited sense now mentioned.

364. The circumstances which distinguish Justice from the other virtues are chiefly two. In the first place, its rules may be laid down with a degree of accuracy, of which moral precepts do not, in any other instance, admit.[2] Secondly, its rules may be enforced; inasmuch as every breach of them violates the rights of some other person, and entitles him to employ force for his defence or security.

365. Another distinction between Justice and the other virtues is much insisted on by Mr. Hume. It is, according to him, an artificial and not a natural virtue; and derives all its obligation from the political union, and from considerations of utility.—[Hobbes.‡]—2*d edit.*

[1] [Taylor, (*Elements of Civil Law?*) p. 372.]—1*st edit.*

* [*Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III. part ii. § 2, *seq.*—*Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Sect. III. and Appendix iii.]

† [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part II. sect. ii. ch. 1-3.]

[2] *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, [l. c.]

‡ [*Leviathan*, *De Cive.*]

366. The principal argument alleged in support of this proposition is, that there is no implanted principle prompting us by a blind impulse to the exercise of Justice, similar to those affections which conspire with and strengthen our benevolent dispositions.

367. But granting the fact upon which this argument proceeds, nothing can be inferred from it that makes an essential distinction between the obligations of Justice and of Beneficence; for, so far as we act merely from the blind impulse of an affection, our conduct cannot be considered as virtuous. Our affections were given us to arrest our attention to particular objects, whose happiness is connected with our exertions; and to excite and support the activity of the mind, when a sense of duty might be insufficient for the purpose: but the propriety or impropriety of our conduct depends, in no instance, on the strength or weakness of the affection, but on our obeying or disobeying the dictates of reason and of conscience. These inform us, in language which it is impossible to mistake, that it is sometimes a duty to check the most amiable and pleasing emotions of the heart; to withdraw, for example, from the sight of those distresses which stronger claims forbid us to relieve, and to deny ourselves that exquisite luxury which arises from the exercise of humanity.—So far, therefore, as Benevolence is a virtue, it is precisely on the same footing with Justice; that is, we approve of it, not because it is agreeable to us, but because we feel it to be a duty.

368. It may be farther remarked, that there are very strong implanted principles which serve as checks on Injustice; the principles, to wit, of Resentment and of Indignation, which are surely as much a part of the human constitution, as pity or parental affection. That these principles imply a sense of Injustice, and consequently of Justice, was formerly observed, (§ 155.)

369. In one remarkable instance, too, Nature has made an additional provision for keeping alive among men a sense of those obligations which Justice imposes. That the good offices which we have received from others constitute a Debt which

it is morally incumbent on us to discharge by all lawful means in our power, is acknowledged in the common forms of expression employed on such occasions, both by philosophers and the vulgar. As the obligations of Gratitude, however, do not admit (like the rules of honesty strictly so called) of support from the magistrate, Nature has judged it proper to enforce their observance, by one of the most irresistible and delightful impulses of the human frame. According to this view of the subject, Gratitude, considered as a moral duty, is a branch of Justice, recommended to us in a peculiar manner by those pleasing emotions which accompany all the modes of benevolent affection. It is, at the same time, a branch of what was formerly called rational benevolence; not interfering with the duty we owe to mankind in general, but tending, in a variety of respects, to augment the sum of social happiness. The casuistical questions to which this part of Ethics has given rise, however perplexing some of them may appear in theory, seldom, if ever, occasion any hesitation in the conduct of those to whom a sense of duty is the acknowledged rule of action:—Such is the harmony among all the various parts of our constitution, when subjected to the control of reason and conscience; and so nearly allied are the dispositions which prompt to the different offices of a virtuous life.

370. As the rules of Justice, when applied to questions involving the rights of other men, admit, in their statement, of a degree of accuracy peculiar to themselves, that part of Ethics which relates to them has been formed, in modern times, into a separate branch of the science, under the title of Natural Jurisprudence.

371. The manner in which this subject has been hitherto treated, has been much influenced by the professional habits of those who first turned their attention to it. Not only have its principles been delivered in the form of a system of law; but the technical language, and the arbitrary arrangements of the Roman code, have been servilely copied.

372. In consequence of this, an important branch of the law of nature has gradually assumed an artificial and scholastic

appearance; and many capricious maxims have insensibly mingled themselves with the principles of universal jurisprudence. Hence, too, the frivolous discussions with respect to minute and imaginary questions, which so often occupy the place of those general and fundamental disquisitions that are suggested by the common nature, and the common circumstances, of the human race.

373. A still more material inconvenience has resulted from the professional habits of the earliest writers on jurisprudence. Not contented with stating the rules of Justice in that form and language which was most familiar to their own minds, they have attempted to extend the same plan to all the other branches of Moral Philosophy; and, by the help of arbitrary definitions, to supersede the necessity of accommodating their modes of inquiry to the various nature of their subject. Although Justice is the only branch of Virtue, in which there is always a Right on the one hand, corresponding to an Obligation on the other, they have contrived, by fictions of Imperfect and of External Rights, to treat indirectly of all our different duties, by pointing out the rights which are supposed to be their correlates. It is chiefly owing to this, that a study, which in the writings of the ancients is the most engaging and the most useful of any, has become, in so great a proportion of modern systems, as uninviting, and almost as useless, as the logic of the schoolmen.

374. Besides these defects in the modern systems of jurisprudence, (defects produced by the accidental habits of those who first cultivated the study,) there is another essential one, arising from the inaccurate conceptions which have been formed of the object of the science. Although the obligations of Justice are by no means resolvable into considerations of Utility, yet, in every political association, they are so blended together in the institutions of men, that it is impossible for us to separate them completely in our reasonings; and accordingly (as Mr. Hume has remarked*) the writers on jurisprudence, while they profess to confine themselves entirely to the former,

* [*Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, Sect. III.]

are continually taking principles for granted which have a reference to the latter. It seems, therefore, to be proper, instead of treating of jurisprudence merely as a system of natural justice, to unite it with politics; and to illustrate the general principles of Justice and of Expediency, as they are actually combined in the constitution of society. This view of the subject (which, according to the arrangement formerly mentioned, (§ 2,) belongs to the third part of Moral Philosophy) will shew, at the same time, how wonderfully these principles coincide in their applications; and how partial those conceptions of utility are, which have so often led politicians to depart from what they felt to be just, in quest of what their limited judgment apprehended to be expedient.

ARTICLE III.—OF VERACITY.

375. The important rank which Veracity holds among our social duties, appears from the obvious consequences that would result, if no foundation were laid for it in the constitution of our nature. The purposes of speech would be frustrated, and every man's opportunities of knowledge would be limited to his own personal experience.

376. Considerations of utility, however, do not seem to be the only ground of the approbation we bestow on this disposition. Abstracting from all regard to consequences, there is something pleasing and amiable in sincerity, openness, and truth; something disagreeable and disgusting in duplicity, equivocation, and falsehood.[1] Dr. Hutcheson himself, the great patron of that theory which resolves all moral qualities into Benevolence, confesses this; for he speaks of a *sense* which leads us to approve of Veracity, distinct from the *sense* which approves of qualities useful to mankind.[2] As this, however, is

[1] [Καθ' αὑτὸ τὸ μὲν ψεῦδος φαῦλον καὶ ψεκτόν· τὸ δὲ ἀληθὲς καλὸν καὶ ἐπαινετόν. "A lie is base and blameworthy of itself, and truth is beautiful and praiseworthy."—Aristotle, (*Eth. Nic.* Lib. IV. c. vii.—*Ed.*)—"Est quiddam, quod suâ vi nos alliciat ad sese, non emolumento captans aliquo, sed trahens suâ dignitate: quod genus virtus, scientia, veritas est."—(Cicero, *De Inventione*, Lib. II. c. lii.—*Ed.*)]—*3d edit.*

[2] *Philosophiæ Moralis Institutu Compendiaria*, [Lib. I. c. vi. § 3. Lib.

at best but a vague way of speaking, it may be proper to analyze more particularly that part of our constitution, from which our approbation of Veracity arises.

377. That there is in the human mind a natural or instinctive principle of Veracity, has been remarked by many authors, —the same part of our constitution which prompts to social intercourse, prompting also to sincerity in our mutual communications. Truth is always the spontaneous and native expression of our sentiments; whereas, Falsehood implies a certain violence done to our nature in consequence of the influence of some motive which we are anxious to conceal.—[Accordingly, it is remarked both by Reid and Smith, that the greatest liars, where they lie once, they speak truth a hundred times.]—2*d edit.*

378. Corresponding to this instinctive principle of Veracity, there is a principle (coeval with the use of language) determining us to repose faith in testimony.[1] Without such a disposition, the education of children would be impracticable; and accordingly, so far from being the result of experience, it seems to be, in the first instance, unlimited; nature intrusting its gradual correction to the progress of reason and observation. It bears a striking analogy, both in its origin and in its final cause, to our instinctive expectation of the continuance of those laws which regulate the course of physical events, (§ 71. (3.)—[As this principle *presupposes* the general practice of veracity, it may be regarded as an additional intimation of that conduct which is conformable to the end and destination of our being.] —2*d edit.*

379. In infancy, the former principle is by no means so conspicuous as the latter; and it sometimes happens, that a good

II. c. x. § 1. See also *System of Moral Philosophy*, Book II. ch. x. § 1, *seq.*—*Ed.*]

[To this principle Dr. Reid gives the title of *the principle of Credulity*. The phrase, however, is not very happily chosen; and accordingly, an anonymous writer has lately proposed to substitute instead of *credulity*, the word *credende;* which, I believe, is as unexceptionable a term as our language affords for conveying the idea.]—2*d edit.*

[1] See Reid's *Inquiry*, Chap. vi. sec 24; and Smith's *Theory*, &c., last edit. vol. ii. p. 326.—[Part VI. sect. 4.]

deal of care is necessary to cherish it. But in such cases it will always be found, that there is some indirect motive combined with the desire of social communication; such as Fear, or Vanity, or Mischief, or Sensuality.—[On this subject there is a remarkable coincidence between the doctrines of Reid's *Inquiry*, and some observations of Smith in the last edition of his *Theory*. Both of these authors have evidently had a view to a refutation of a theory of Hume's, which would resolve our expectation in both cases, into a judgment of the understanding founded on *experience*.]—2*d edit.* An habitual disposition, therefore, to deceit, may be considered as an infallible symptom of some more remote, and perhaps less palpable evil, disordering the moral constitution. It is only by detecting and removing this radical fault, that its pernicious consequences can be corrected.

380. From these imperfect hints it would appear that every breach of Veracity indicates some latent vice, or some criminal intention, which an individual is ashamed to avow: And hence the peculiar beauty of openness or sincerity; uniting, in some degree, in itself, the graces of all the other moral qualities of which it attests the existence.

381. Fidelity to promises, which is commonly regarded as a branch of Veracity, is perhaps more properly a branch of Justice; but this is merely a question of arrangement, and of little consequence to our present purpose.

382. If a person give his promise, intending to perform, but fails in the execution, his fault is, strictly speaking, a breach of Justice. As there is a natural faith in testimony, so there is a natural expectation excited by a promise. When I excite this expectation, and lead other men to act accordingly, I convey a right to the performance of my promise, and I act unjustly if I fail in performing it.

383. If a person promises, not intending to perform, he is guilty of a complication of injustice and falsehood; for although a declaration of present intention does not amount to a promise, every promise involves a declaration of present intention.

384. In the cases which have been hitherto mentioned, the

practice of Veracity is secured, to a considerable extent, in modern Europe, by the received maxims of *Honour*, which brand with infamy every palpable deviation from the truth in matters of fact, or in the fulfilment of promises. Veracity, however, considered as a moral duty, is not confined to sincerity in the use of speech, but prohibits every circumstance in our external conduct, which is calculated to mislead others, by conveying to them false information. It prohibits, in like manner, the wilful employment of sophistry in an argument, no less than a wilful misrepresentation of fact. The fashion of the times may establish distinctions in these different cases; but none of them are sanctioned by the principles of morality.

385. The same disposition of mind, which leads to the practice of Veracity in our commerce with the world, cherishes the love of Truth in our philosophical inquiries. This active principle (which is indeed but another name for the principle of Curiosity) seems also to be an ultimate fact in the human frame.

386. Although, however, in its first origin, not resolvable into views of utility, the gradual discovery of its extensive effects on human improvement cannot fail to confirm and to augment its native influence on the mind. The connexion between error and misery, between truth and happiness, becomes more apparent as our researches proceed; producing at last a complete conviction, that even in those cases where we are unable to trace it, the connexion subsists; and encouraging the free and unbiassed exercise of our rational powers, as an expression at once of benevolence to man, and of confidence in the righteous administration of the universe.

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387. The duties which have been mentioned in this article are all independent of any particular relation between us and other men. But there is a great variety of other duties resulting from such relations;—the duties, for example, of Friendship and of Patriotism; besides those relative duties which moralists have distinguished by the titles of Economical and Political:—[comprehending under the former, the duties of

husband, wife, parent, child, master, servant; and under the latter, the duties arising from the relation of magistrate and subject, &c.]—1*st edit.* would lead into the details of practical Ethics.

' attempt an enumeration of these,

SECT. III.—OF THE DUTIES WHICH RESPECT OURSELVES.

ARTICLE FIRST.—GENERAL REMARKS ON THIS CLASS OF OUR DUTIES.

388. Prudence,[1] Temperance, [illegible] quisite for enabling us to discharge [illegible] securing our own private happiness; [illegible] necessarily imply any reference to our fellow-[illegible] seem to belong most properly to this third branch of Virtue.

389. An illustration of the nature and tendency of these qualities, and of the means by which they are to be improved and confirmed, although a most important article of Ethics, does not lead to any discussions of so abstract a kind, as to require particular attention in a work, of which brevity is a principal object.

390. It is sufficient here to remark, that, independently of all considerations of utility, either to ourselves or to others, these qualities are approved of as right and becoming. Their utility, at the same time, or rather necessity, for securing the discharge of our other duties, adds greatly to the respect they command, and is certainly the chief ground of the obligation we lie under, to cultivate the habits by which they are formed.

391. A steady regard, in the conduct of life, to the happiness and perfection of our own nature, and a diligent study of the means by which these ends may be attained, is another duty belonging to this branch of virtue. It is a duty so important and comprehensive, that it leads to the practice of all the rest; and is therefore entitled to a very full and particular examination, in a system of Moral Philosophy. Such an examination, while it leads our thoughts "to the end and aim of our being,"

[1] ["Cunning is a kind of short-sightedness, that discovers the minutest objects which are near at hand, but is not able to discern things at a distance."—Addison.]—*3d edit.*

will again bring under our review the various duties already considered; and, by showing how they all conspire in recommending the same dispositions, will illustrate the unity of design in the human constitution, and the benevolent wisdom displayed in its formation. Other subordinate duties, besides, which it would be tedious to enumerate under separate titles, may thus be placed in a light more interesting and agreeable.

ARTICLE SECOND.

OF THE DUTY OF EMPLOYING THE MEANS WE POSSESS TO PROMOTE OUR OWN HAPPINESS.

392. According to Dr. Hutcheson, our conduct, so far as it is influenced by self-love, is never the object of moral approbation. Even a regard to the pleasures of a good conscience he considered as detracting from the merit of those actions which it encourages us to perform.[1]

393. That the principle of Self-love (or, in other words, the desire of happiness) is neither an object of approbation nor of blame, is sufficiently obvious. It is inseparable from the nature of man, as a rational and a sensitive being, (§ 161.)

394. It is, however, no less obvious, on the other hand, that this desire, considered as a principle of action, has by no means a uniform influence on the conduct. Our animal appetites, our affections, and the other inferior principles of our nature, interfere as often with Self-love as with benevolence; and mislead us from our own happiness as much as from the duties we owe to others.

395. In these cases, every spectator pronounces that we *deserve* to suffer for our folly and indiscretion; and we ourselves, as soon as the tumult of passion is over, feel in the same manner. Nor is this remorse merely a sentiment of regret for having missed that happiness which we might have enjoyed. We are dissatisfied, not with our condition merely, but with our conduct;—with our having forfeited, by our own imprudence, what we might have attained.[2]

[1] [Shaftesbury does not go so far—see *Inquiry*, Part III. sect. iii.]—*1st edit.*

[2] See Butler's *Sermons.—Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue*, [sects. 66, 67.]

396. It is true that we do not feel so warm an indignation against the neglect of private good, as against perfidy, cruelty, and injustice. The reason probably is, that imprudence commonly carries its own punishment along with it; and our resentment is disarmed by pity.—Indeed, as that habitual regard to his own happiness, which every man feels, unless when under the influence of some violent appetite, is a powerful check on imprudence; it was less necessary to provide an additional punishment for this vice, in the indignation of the world.

397. From the principles now stated, it follows, that, in a person who believes in a future state, the criminality of every bad action is aggravated by the imprudence with which it is accompanied.

398. It follows also, that the punishments annexed by the civil magistrate to particular actions, render the commission of them more criminal than it would otherwise be; insomuch, that if an action, in itself perfectly indifferent, were prohibited by some arbitrary law, under a severe penalty, the commission of that action (unless we were called to it by some urgent consideration of duty) would be criminal; not merely on account of the obedience which a subject owes to established authority, but on account of the regard which every man ought to feel for his life and reputation.

ARTICLE THIRD.—OF HAPPINESS.

399. The most superficial observation of life is sufficient to convince us, that happiness is not to be attained, by giving every appetite and desire the gratification they demand; and that it is necessary for us to form to ourselves some plan or system of conduct, in subordination to which all other objects are to be pursued.

400. To ascertain what this system ought to be, is a problem which has in all ages employed the speculations of philosophers. Among the ancients, it was the principal subject of controversy which divided the schools; and it was treated in such a manner as to involve almost every other question of Ethics. The opinions maintained with respect to it by some of their sects,

comprehended many of the most important truths to which the inquiry leads; and leave little to be added, but a few corrections and limitations of their conclusions.

I. OPINIONS OF THE ANCIENTS, CONCERNING THE SOVEREIGN GOOD.[1]

401. These opinions may be all reduced to three; those of the *Epicureans*, of the *Stoics*, and of the *Peripatetics*.

402. According to Epicurus, bodily pleasure and pain are the sole ultimate objects of desire and aversion; and everything else is desired or shunned, from its supposed tendency to procure the former, or to save us from the latter. Even the virtues are not valuable on their own account, but as the means of subjecting our pleasures and pains to our own power.[2]

403. The pleasures and pains of the mind are all derived (in the system of this Philosopher) from the recollection and anticipation of those of the body; but these recollections and anticipations are represented as of more value to our happiness, on the whole, than the pleasures and pains from which they are derived; for they occupy a much greater proportion of life, and the regulation of them depends on ourselves. Epicurus, therefore, placed the supreme good in ease of body and tranquillity of mind, but much more in the latter than in the former; insomuch that he affirmed that a wise man might preserve his happiness under any degree of bodily suffering.

404. Notwithstanding the errors and paradoxes of this system, and the very dangerous language in which its principles are expressed, it deserves the attention of those who prosecute moral inquiries, on account of the testimony it bears to the connexion between Virtue and Happiness. And accordingly, Mr. Smith remarks, that "Seneca, though a Stoic, the sect most opposite to that of Epicurus, yet quotes this philosopher more frequently than any other."*

[1] See *Institutes of Moral Philosophy*, by Dr. Ferguson.

[2] Cicero, *De Finibus*, Lib. I. c. xiii.

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VI. sect. ii. ch. 4.]

405. The Stoics placed the supreme good in rectitude of conduct, without any regard to the event.

406. They did not however, recommend an indifference to external objects, or a life of inactivity and apathy; but, on the contrary, they taught that Nature pointed out to us certain objects of choice and rejection, and amongst these, some as more to be chosen and avoided than others; and that virtue consisted in choosing and rejecting objects according to their intrinsic value. They only contended that these objects should be pursued, not as the means of our happiness, but because we believe it to be agreeable to nature that we should pursue them; and that, therefore, when we have done our utmost, we should regard the event as indifferent.

407. The scale of desirable objects exhibited in this system, was peculiarly calculated to encourage the social virtues. It taught, that the prosperity of two was preferable to that of one, that of a city to that of a family, and that of our country to all partial considerations. On this principle, added to a sublime sentiment of piety, it founded its chief argument for an entire resignation to the dispensations of Providence. As all events are ordered by perfect wisdom and goodness, the Stoics concluded that whatever happens is calculated to produce the greatest possible good to the universe in general. As it is agreeable, therefore, to nature, that we should prefer the happiness of many to that of a few, and of all to that of many, they concluded, that every event which happens is precisely that which we ourselves would have desired if we had been acquainted with the whole scheme of the Divine administration.

408. While the Stoics held this elevated language, they acknowledged the weaknesses of humanity; but insisted that it is the business of the philosopher to delineate what is perfect, without lowering the dignity of Virtue by limitations arising from the frailties of mankind.[1]

[1] The most important doctrines of this school have been illustrated by Dr. Ferguson, with that depth and eloquence which distinguish all his writings, in a work lately published, on the *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*.

409. In the greater part of these opinions, the Peripatetics agreed with the Stoics. They admitted, that Virtue ought to be the law of our conduct, and that no other good was to be compared to it; but they did not represent it as the *sole* good, nor affect a total indifference to things external. "Pugnant Stoici cum Peripateticis," says Cicero: "Alteri negant quidquam bonum esse nisi quod honestum sit; alteri longe longeque plurimum se attribuere honestati; sed tamen et in corpore, et extra, esse quædam bona. Certamen honestum, et disputatio splendida."*

410. On the whole, it appears, (to use the words of Dr. Ferguson,) that "all these sects acknowledged the necessity of virtue, or allowed, that in every well-directed pursuit of happiness, the strictest regard to morality was required. The Stoics alone maintained that this regard itself was happiness, or that to run the course of an active, strenuous, wise, and beneficent mind, was itself the very good which we ought to pursue."†

II. ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON HAPPINESS.

411. From the slight view now given of the systems of philosophers, with respect to the sovereign good, it may be assumed as an acknowledged and indisputable fact, that happiness arises chiefly from the Mind. The Stoics perhaps expressed this too strongly, when they said, that to a wise man external circumstances are indifferent. Yet it must be confessed, that happiness depends much less on these than is commonly imagined; and that, as there is no situation so prosperous, as to exclude the torments of malice, cowardice, and remorse; so there is none so adverse, as to withhold the enjoyment of a benevolent, resolute, and upright heart.

412. If from the sublime idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, we descend to such characters as the world presents to us, some important limitations of the Stoical conclusions become

The reader may also consult the Account of the Stoical system in Mr. Smith's *Theory*, last edition; and the notes subjoined by Mr. Harris to his *Dialogue on Happiness*.—[With respect to the Stoicism of the Roman Law, see Taylor's *Elements*.]—1*st and* 3*d editt.*

* [*De Fin.* Lib. II. c. xxi.]

† [See *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, Part II. ch. i. sect. 7.]

necessary. Mr. Hume has remarked,* that "as in the bodily system a *toothache* produces more violent convulsions of pain than a *phthisis* or a *dropsy;* so in the economy of the mind, although all vice be pernicious, yet the disturbance or pain is not measured out by nature with exact proportion to the degree of vice."—The same author adds, that "if a man be liable to a vice or imperfection, it may often happen, that a good quality which he possesses along with it, will render him more miserable than if he were completely vicious."

413. Abstracting even from these considerations, and supposing a character as perfect as the frailty of human nature admits of, various mental qualities, which have no immediate connexion with moral desert, are necessary to insure happiness. In proof of this remark, it is sufficient to consider, how much our tranquillity is liable to be affected,—

(1.) By our Temper.
(2.) By our Imagination.
(3.) By our Opinions. And,
(4.) And by our Habits.

414. In all these respects, the mind may be influenced, to a great degree, by original constitution, or by early education; and when this influence happens to be unfavourable, it is not to be corrected, at once, by the precepts of philosophy. Much, however, may undoubtedly be done, in such instances, by our own persevering efforts; and therefore the particulars now enumerated, deserve our attention, not only from their connexion with the speculative question concerning the essentials of happiness, but on account of the practical conclusions to which the consideration of them may lead.

INFLUENCE OF THE TEMPER ON HAPPINESS.

415. The word Temper, which has various significations in our language, is here used to express the habitual state of the mind in point of Irascibility;—a part of the character intimately connected with happiness, in consequence of the pleasures

* [Not Essay xvi., *The Stoic*, but Essay xviii., *The Sceptic*, towards the end.]

and pains attached respectively to the exercise of our benevolent and malevolent affections, (§§ 147, 157.)

416. Resentment was distinguished (§ 154) into Instinctive and Deliberate; the latter of which, it was observed, (§ 155,) has always a reference to the motives of the person against whom it is directed, and implies a sense of justice, or of moral good and evil.

417. In some men the animal or instinctive impulse is stronger than in others. Where this is the case, or where proper care has not been taken in early education to bring it under restraint, a quick or irascible temper is the necessary consequence. It is a fault frequently observable in affectionate and generous characters; and impairs their happiness, not so much by the effects it produces on their minds, as by the eventual misfortunes to which it exposes them.

418. When the animal resentment does not immediately subside, it must be supported by an opinion of bad intention in its object: and, consequently, when this happens to an individual so habitually as to be characteristical of his temper, it indicates a disposition on his part to put unfavourable constructions on the actions of others. In some instances, this may proceed from a settled conviction of the worthlessness of mankind: but, in general, it originates in self-dissatisfaction, occasioned by the consciousness of vice or folly; which leads the person who feels it, to withdraw his attention from himself, by referring the causes of his ill-humour to the imaginary faults of his neighbours.

419. For curing these mental disorders, nothing is so effectual as the cultivation of that candour with respect to the motives of others, which results from habits of attention to our own infirmities, and to the numerous circumstances which, independently of any criminal intention, produce the appearance of vice, in human conduct, (§ 360.)

420. By suppressing, too, as far as possible, the external signs of peevishness, or of violence, much may be done to produce a gradual alteration in the state of the mind; and to render us not only more agreeable to others, but more happy

in ourselves.—So intimate is the connexion between mind and body, that the mere imitation of any strong expression has a tendency to excite the corresponding passion; and, on the other hand, the suppression of the external sign has a tendency to compose the passion which it indicates.

421. The influence of the temper on happiness is much increased by another circumstance: That the same causes which alienate our hearts from our fellow-creatures, are apt to suggest unfavourable views of the course of human affairs, and lead, by an easy transition, to a desponding scepticism.

422. As the temper has, in these instances, an influence on the opinions; so the views we form of the administration of the universe, and, in particular, of the condition and prospects of man, have a reciprocal influence on the temper. The belief of overruling wisdom and goodness communicates the most heart-felt of all satisfactions; and the idea of prevailing order and happiness has an habitual effect in composing the discordant affections; similar to what we experience, when, in some retired and tranquil scene, we enjoy the sweet serenity of a summer evening.—[Akenside, p. 240.*]—1*st edit.*

INFLUENCE OF THE IMAGINATION ON HAPPINESS.

423. One of the principal effects of a liberal education, is to accustom us to withdraw our attention from the objects of our present perceptions, and to dwell at pleasure on the past, the absent, and the future. How much it must enlarge, in this way, the sphere of our enjoyment or suffering, is obvious; for (not to mention the recollection of the past) all that part of our happiness or misery, which arises from our hopes or our fears, derives its existence entirely from the power of Imagination.

424. In some men, indeed, Imagination produces little either of pleasure or of pain; its exercise being limited, in a great measure, to the anticipation or recollection of sensual gratifications.

425. To others it is an instrument of exquisite distress;—

* [*Pleasures of Imagination*, Book III. l. 471?]

where the mind, for instance, has been early depressed with scepticism, or alarmed with the terrors of superstition.

426. To those whose education has been fortunately conducted, it opens inexhaustible sources of delight; presenting continually to their thoughts the fairest views of mankind and of Providence; and, under the deepest gloom of adverse fortune, gilding the prospects of futurity.

427. The liveliness of the pictures which imagination exhibits, depends probably, in part, on original constitution; but much more on the care with which this faculty has been cultivated in our tender years. The complexion of these pictures, in point of gaiety or sadness, depends almost entirely on the associations which our first habits have led us to form.

428. Even on those men whose imaginations have received little or no cultivation, the influence of association is great, and enters more or less into every estimate they form of the value of external objects. Much may be done by a wise education to render this part of our constitution subservient to our happiness, (§ 60.)

429. Where the mind has been hurt by early impressions, they are not to be corrected wholly by Reasoning. More is to be expected from the opposite associations which may be gradually formed by a new course of studies and of occupations, or by a complete change of scenes, of habits, and of society.

INFLUENCE OF OPINIONS ON HAPPINESS.

430. By Opinions are here meant, not merely speculative conclusions to which we have given our assent, but convictions which have taken root in the mind, and have an habitual influence on the conduct.

431. Of these opinions, a very great and important part are, in the case of all mankind, interwoven by education with their first habits of thinking; or are insensibly imbibed from the manners of the times.

432. Where such opinions are erroneous, they may often be corrected, to a great degree, by the persevering efforts of a reflecting and a vigorous mind; but as the number of minds

capable of reflection is comparatively small, it becomes a duty on all who have themselves experienced the happy effects of juster and more elevated principles, to impart, as far as they are able, the same blessing to others. The subject is of too great extent to be prosecuted in a treatise of which the plan excludes all attempts at illustration; but the reader will find it discussed at great length, in a very valuable section of Dr. Ferguson's *Principles of Moral and Political Science.*[1]

INFLUENCE OF HABITS ON HAPPINESS.

433. The effects of Habit in reconciling our minds to the inconveniences of our situation, was formerly remarked, (§ 314;) and an argument was drawn from it in proof of the goodness of our Creator, who, besides making so rich a provision of objects suited to the principles of our nature, has thus bestowed on us a power of accommodation to external circumstances which these principles teach us to avoid.

434. This tendency, however, of the mind to adapt itself to the objects with which it is familiarly conversant, may, in some instances, not only be a source of occasional suffering, but may disqualify us for relishing the best enjoyments which human life affords. The habits contracted during infancy and childhood are so much more inveterate than those of our maturer years, that they have been justly said to constitute *a second nature;* and if, unfortunately, they have been formed amidst circumstances over which we have no control, they leave us no security for our happiness, but the caprice of fortune.

435. To habituate the minds of children to those occupations and enjoyments alone, which it is in the power of an individual, at all times, to command, is the most solid foundation that can be laid for their future tranquillity. These, too, are the occupations and enjoyments which afford the most genuine and substantial satisfaction: and if education were judiciously employed to second, in this respect, the recommendations of nature, they might appropriate to themselves all the borrowed charms which the vanities of the world derive from casual associations.

[1] Part II. chap. i. sect. 8.

436. With respect to pursuits which depend, in the first instance, on our own choice, it is of the last consequence for us to keep constantly in view, how much of the happiness of mankind arises from habit; and, in the formation of our plans, to disregard those prepossessions and prejudices which so often warp the judgment in the conduct of life. "Choose that course of action (says Pythagoras) which is best, and custom will soon render it the most agreeable."*—[" Brevis est institutio vitæ honestæ beatæque, si credas. Natura enim nos ad mentem optimam genuit: adeoque discere meliora volentibus promptum est, ut vere intuenti mirum sit illud magis, malos esse tam multos. Nam ut aqua piscibus, ut sicca terrenis, circumfusus nobis spiritus volucribus convenit: ita certe facilius esse opportebat, secundum naturam, quam contra eam vivere."—Quintilian, *Instit.* Lib. XII. c. xi.]—*2d edit.*

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437. The foregoing remarks relate to what may be called the essentials of happiness;—the circumstances which constitute the general state or habit of mind, that is necessary to lay a ground-work for every other enjoyment.

438. This foundation being supposed, the sum of happiness enjoyed by an individual will be proportioned to the degree in which he is able to secure all the various pleasures belonging to our nature.

439. These pleasures may be referred to the following heads:—

(1.) The pleasures of Activity and Repose.

(2.) The pleasures of Sense.

(3.) The pleasures of Imagination.

(4.) The pleasures of the Understanding.

(5.) The pleasures of the Heart.

440. An examination and comparison of these different classes of our enjoyments is necessary, even on the Stoical principles, to complete the inquiry concerning happiness; in order to ascertain the relative value of the different objects of choice and rejection.

* [Plutarch, (*De Exilio; Opera*, Tom. II. p. 602, ed. Xylandri.)]

441. Such an examination, however, would lead into details inconsistent with the plan, and foreign to the design of these Outlines. To those who choose to prosecute the subject, it opens a field of speculation equally curious and useful, and much less exhausted by moralists than might have been expected from its importance.

442. The practical conclusion resulting from the inquiry is, that the wisest plan of economy, with respect to our pleasures, is not merely compatible with a strict observance of the rules of morality, but is, in a great measure, comprehended in these rules, and, therefore, that the happiness, as well as the perfection of our nature, consists in doing our duty, with as little solicitude about the event, as is consistent with the weakness of humanity.

443. It may be useful once more to remark, (§ 172, 3.) before leaving the subject, that notwithstanding these happy effects of a virtuous life, the principle of Duty and the desire of Happiness are radically distinct from each other. The peace of mind, indeed, which is the immediate reward of good actions, and the sense of merit with which they are accompanied, create, independently of experience, a very strong presumption in favour of the connexion between Happiness and Virtue: but the facts in human life which justify this conclusion, are not obvious to careless spectators: nor would philosophers in every age have agreed so unanimously in adopting it, if they had not been led to the truth by a shorter and more direct process than an examination of the remote consequences of virtuous and of vicious conduct.

444. To this observation it may be added, that if the desire of Happiness were the sole, or even the ruling principle of action, in a good man, it could scarcely fail to frustrate its own object, by filling his mind with anxious conjectures about futurity, and with perplexing calculations of the various chances of good and evil. Whereas he, whose ruling principle of action is a sense of Duty, conducts himself in the business of life with boldness, consistency, and dignity, and finds himself rewarded by that happiness which so often eludes the pursuit of those who exert every faculty of the mind, in order to attain it.

SECTION IV.—OF THE DIFFERENT THEORIES WHICH HAVE BEEN FORMED CONCERNING THE OBJECT OF MORAL APPROBATION.

445. It was before remarked, (§ 245,) that the different Theories of Virtue which have prevailed in modern times, have arisen chiefly from attempts to trace all the branches of our duty to one principle of action; such as a rational Self-love, Benevolence, Justice, or a disposition to obey the will of God.

446. That none of these Theories is agreeable to fact, may be collected from the reasonings which have been already stated. The harmony, however, which exists among our various good dispositions, and their general coincidence in determining us to the same course of life, bestows on all of them, when skilfully proposed, a certain degree of plausibility.

447. The systematical spirit, from which they have taken their rise, although a fertile source of error, has not been without its use; inasmuch as it has roused the attention of ingenious men to the most important of all studies, that of the end and destination of human life. The facility, at the same time, with which so great a variety of consequences may be all traced from distinct principles, affords a demonstration of that unity and consistency of design, which is no less conspicuous in the moral, than in the material world.

SECTION V.—OF THE GENERAL DEFINITION OF VIRTUE.

448. The various duties which have now been considered, all agree with each other in one common quality, that of being *obligatory* on rational and voluntary agents; and they are all enjoined by the same authority;—the authority of conscience. These duties, therefore, are but different articles of *one law*, which is properly expressed by the word *Virtue;* [or still more unequivocally, by the phrase, *Moral Law of Nature.*]—*2d edit.*

449. The same word (as will be more particularly stated in the next section) is employed to express the moral excellence of a character. When so employed, it seems properly to denote a confirmed Habit of mind, as distinguished from good dispositions operating occasionally. It was formerly said, (§ 161,) that the characters of men receive their denominations of Covetous, Voluptuous, Ambitious, &c. from the particular active principle which prevailingly influences the conduct. A man, accordingly, whose ruling or habitual principle of action is a sense of Duty, or a regard to what is Right, may be properly denominated Virtuous. Agreeably to this view of the subject, the ancient Pythagoreans defined Virtue to be, "*Ἕξις τοῦ δέοντος*:*—the oldest definition of Virtue of which we have any account, and the most unexceptionable, perhaps, which is yet to be found in any system of philosophy.

450. These observations lead to an explanation of what has at first sight the appearance of paradox in the ethical doctrines of Aristotle; that where there is Self-denial there is no Virtue.[1] That the merit of particular actions is increased by the self-denial with which they are accompanied, cannot be disputed: but it is only when we are learning the practice of our duties, that this self-denial is exercised, (for the practice of morality, as well as of everything else, is facilitated by repeated acts;) and, therefore, if the word Virtue be employed to express that habit of mind which it is the great object of a good man to confirm, it will follow, that, in proportion as he approaches to it, his efforts of self-denial must diminish; and that all occasion for them would cease, if his end were completely attained.

* [*Ἀ δ' ἀρετὰ, ἕξις τίς ἐστι τοῦ δέοντος*,—as the Doric has it of the fragment attributed to Theages, (Gale, *Opuscula Mythologica, Physica, et Ethica*, p. 690, ed. Amstel. 1688.) The definition merits Mr. Stewart's encomium; but all the Pythagorean fragments, Physical and Ethical, preserved by Stobæus, &c., are comparatively recent forgeries, fabricated from the works especially of Plato and Aristotle, and these philosophers are not plagiarists of more ancient writers as vulgarly believed.—*Ed.*]

[1] *Ancient Metaphysics*, Vol. III. p xli. of the Preface.

SECTION VI.—OF AN AMBIGUITY IN THE WORDS RIGHT AND WRONG, VIRTUE AND VICE.

451. The epithets Right and Wrong, Virtuous and Vicious, are applied sometimes to *external actions*, and sometimes to the *intentions* of the agent. A similar ambiguity may be remarked in the corresponding words in other languages.

452. The distinction made by some moralists between Absolute and Relative Rectitude, was introduced, in order to obviate the confusion of ideas which this ambiguity has a tendency to produce; and it is a distinction of so great importance, as to merit a particular illustration in a system of Ethics.

453. An action may be said to be Absolutely right, when it is in every respect suitable to the circumstances in which the agent is placed: or, in other words, when it is such, as, with perfectly good intentions, under the guidance of an enlightened and well-informed understanding, he would have performed.

454. An action may be said to be Relatively right, when the intentions of the agent are sincerely good;—whether his conduct be suitable to his circumstances or not.

455. According to these definitions, an action may be right, in one sense, and wrong in another; an ambiguity in language, which, how obvious soever, has not always been attended to by the writers on morals.

456. It is the relative rectitude of an action which determines the moral desert of the agent; but it is its absolute rectitude which determines its utility to his worldly interests, and to the welfare of Society. And it is only so far as relative and absolute rectitude coincide, that utility can be affirmed to be a quality of virtue.

457. A strong sense of duty will indeed induce us to avail ourselves of all the talents we possess, and of all the information within our reach, to act agreeably to the rules of absolute rectitude. And if we fail in doing so, our negligence is criminal. But still, in every particular instance, our duty consists in doing what appears to us to be right at the time; and if, while we follow this rule, we should incur any blame, our demerit does

not arise from acting according to an erroneous judgment, but from our previous misemployment of the means we possessed, for correcting the errors to which our judgment is liable.

458. From these principles it follows, That actions, although materially right, are not meritorious with respect to the agent, unless performed from a sense of duty. This sense necessarily accompanies every action which is an object of moral approbation.

SECTION VII.—OF THE OFFICE AND USE OF REASON IN THE PRACTICE OF MORALITY.

459. It was observed (§ 457) that a strong sense of duty, while it leads us to cultivate with care our good dispositions, will induce us to avail ourselves of all the means in our power for the wise regulation of our external conduct. The occasions on which it is necessary for us to employ our reason in this way, are chiefly the three following:—

(1.) When we have ground for suspecting that our moral judgments and feelings may have been warped and perverted by the prejudices of education.

(2.) When there appears to be an interference between different duties, so as to render it doubtful in what the exact propriety of conduct consists. To this head may be referred those cases in which the rights of different parties are concerned.

(3.) When the ends at which our duty prompts us to aim, are to be accomplished by means which require choice and deliberation.

460. It is owing to the last of these considerations, that the study of happiness, both private and public, becomes an important part of the science of Ethics. Indeed, without this study, the best dispositions of the heart, whether relating to ourselves or to others, may be in a great measure useless.

461. The subject of happiness, so far as relates to the Individual, has been already considered.—The great extent and

difficulty of those inquiries which have for their object to ascertain what constitutes the happiness of a Community, and by what means it may be most effectually promoted, make it necessary to separate them from the other questions of Ethics, and to form them into a distinct branch of the science.

462. It is not, however, in this respect alone, that politics is connected with the other branches of Moral Philosophy. The provisions which nature has made for the intellectual and moral progress of the species, all suppose the existence of the political union: And the particular form which this union happens, in the case of any Community, to assume, determines many of the most important circumstances in the character of the people, and many of those opinions and habits which affect the happiness of private life.

[PART THIRD,—"Of Man considered as the Member of a Political body," will be found at the commencement of Vol. VIII.—*Ed.*]

THE PHILOSOPHY

OF THE

ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS OF MAN.

BOOKS FIRST AND SECOND.

PREFACE.

Before proceeding to my proper subject, I may be permitted to say something in explanation of the large, and perhaps disproportionate space which I have allotted in these volumes to the Doctrines of Natural Religion. To account for this I have to observe, that this part of my Work contains the substance of Lectures given in the University of Edinburgh, in the year 1792-93, and for almost twenty years afterwards, and that my hearers comprised many individuals, not only from England and the United States of America, but not a few from France, Switzerland, the north of Germany, and other parts of Europe. To those who reflect on the state of the world at that period, and who consider the miscellaneous circumstances and characters of my audience, any farther explanation on this head is, I trust, unnecessary.

The danger with which I conceived the youth of this country to be threatened, by that inundation of sceptical or rather atheistical publications which were then imported from the Continent, was immensely increased by the enthusiasm which, at the dawn of the French Revolution, was naturally excited in young and generous minds. A supposed connexion between an enlightened zeal for Political Liberty and the reckless boldness of the uncompromising free-thinker, operated

powerfully with the vain and the ignorant in favour of the publications alluded to.

Another circumstance concurred with those which have been mentioned in prompting me to a more full and systematical illustration of these doctrines than had been attempted by any of my predecessors. Certain divines in Scotland were pleased, soon after this critical era, to discover a disposition to set at nought the evidences of Natural Religion, with a professed, and, I doubt not, in many cases, with a sincere view to strengthen the cause of Christianity. Some of these writers were probably not aware that they were only repeating the language of Bayle, Hume, Helvetius, and many other modern authors of the same description, who have endeavoured to cover their attacks upon those essential principles on which all religion is founded, under a pretended zeal for the interests of Revelation. It was not thus, I recollected, that Cudworth, and Barrow, and Locke, and Clarke, and Butler reasoned on the subject; nor those enlightened writers of a later date, who have consecrated their learning and talents to the farther illustration of the same argument. "He," says Locke, who has forcibly and concisely expressed their common sentiments, "He that takes away Reason to make way for Revelation puts out the light of both, and does much the same as if we would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the light of an invisible star by a telescope."[1]

This passage from Locke brought to my recollection the memorable words of Melanchthon, so remarkably distinguished from most of our other Reformers by the mildness of his temper and the liberality of his opinions: "Wherefore our decision is this; that those precepts which learned men have committed to writing, transcribing them from the common

[1] *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book IV. chap. xix. sect. 4.

reason and common feelings of human nature, are to be accounted as not less divine than those contained in the tables given to Moses; and that it could not be the intention of our Maker to supersede, by a law graven upon stone, that which is written with his own finger on the table of the heart." *

Strongly impressed with these ideas, I published for the use of my students, in November 1793, a small Manual under the title of *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, which I afterwards used as a text-book as long as I continued to give lectures in the University. The second part of this Manual contains the same principles, expressed nearly in the same words, with the present publication, in which these principles are much more fully expanded, illustrated, and defended.

My attention was thus imperatively called to this part of my course in a greater degree than to any other, by the aspect of the times when I entered upon the duties of my office as Professor of Moral Philosophy. And it gives me heartfelt satisfaction to believe, that, in consequence of the more general diffusion of knowledge among all ranks of people, such discussions are now become much less necessary than they seemed to me to be at that period. In this belief I am confirmed by the eagerness with which the "Library of Useful Knowledge" has been welcomed by that class of readers for whom it is more peculiarly intended. In the admirable Preliminary Treatise on the Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of Science,† it is said,—"The highest of all our gratifications in the contemplation of science remains: We are raised by it to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all his works. Not a step can we take in any direction without perceiving the most extraordinary traces of

* [See, *Loci Theologici*, 195; also, *inter alia*, Manlii *Collectanea*, (e Melanchthone,) 1563, *pluries*.]

† [By Lord Brougham.]

design; and the skill everywhere conspicuous, is calculated in so vast a proportion of instances to promote the happiness of living creatures, and especially of ourselves, that we can feel no hesitation in concluding, that, if we knew the whole scheme of Providence, every part would be in harmony with a plan of absolute benevolence."[1] The same tone has been caught, wherever the subject admitted of it, by the authors of the subsequent numbers. It is not often (if ever) that those who do not enjoy the advantages of a liberal education have been thus addressed; and the promptitude with which the labouring classes have availed themselves of this means of instruction is the best proof how congenial its spirit is to their plain good sense and unperverted feelings; and how well-founded is the saying of Cicero, that "the natural food of our minds is the study and contemplation of Nature."[2]

I cannot conclude this Preface without expressing the satisfaction I have felt in observing among the more liberal writers in France, a reviving taste for the Philosophy of the Human Mind. To this no one has contributed more than M. Victor Cousin, so well known, and so honourably distinguished, as the object of Jesuitical persecution; a persecution which appears to have followed him beyond the limits of his own country. To him the learned world is indebted, not only for his own very valuable writings, but for a French translation, accompanied with notes, of the whole works of Plato; for an edition of the works of Proclus, the Platonic Philosopher, from a Manuscript in the Royal Library of Paris;[3] and, last of all, for

[1] Page 47.

[2] Est animorum ingeniorumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturæ.—*Acad. Quæs.* Lib. IV. cap. xli.

[3] *Procli Philosophi Platonici Opera;* e codicibus MSS. Bibliothecæ Regiæ Parisiensis, tum primum edidit, versione Latinâ et Commentariis illustravit Victor Cousin, Professor Philosophiæ in Academia Parisiensi.

a complete edition of the works of Descartes,—a most important publication in the present state of science in France. M. Royer Collard, whose great talents have long been zealously devoted to the same pursuits, has, if I am not misinformed, already made considerable progress in a translation of Dr. Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*,—a report to which I give the more credit, from the account of his previous studies given by a most respectable writer, M. Jouffroy, in a work which appeared at Paris in 1826. "Trahie par ses conséquences et par sa propre méthode, la philosophie de Condillac fut mise en question par un certain nombre d'esprits distingués, et enfin soumise à une discussion publique par M. Royer Collard. Dans les trois années de son enseignement, ce savant Professeur, qui n'est plus pour la France qu'un grand Citoyen, démontra, contre la doctrine de Condillac, ce que Reid avoit démontré contre celle de Locke; et en adoptant la méthode expérimentale de l'école de la sensation, prouva que cette école avoit été infidèle à cette méthode. M. Cousin acheva ce que M. Royer Collard avoit commencé. . . . . L'enseignement de ces deux illustres Professeurs devoit porter ses fruits, et il les a portés. Dans l'esprit de ceux qui ont assisté à leurs leçons, il ne reste pas un doute sur la direction que doivent suivre les recherches philosophiques."

And here may I be pardoned for gratifying a personal feeling, by mentioning the pleasure which I have lately received from a perusal of the very elegant translation by M. Jouffroy of my *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*, preceded by a long introduction full of original and important matter. This publication, together with the space occupied in the *Fragmens Philosophiques* of M. Cousin by large extracts from the same work, comprising nearly the whole of its contents, encourage me in the hope, that the volumes I now publish, which may be

considered as a Comment on the Ethical part of my *Outlines*, may perhaps find a few who will not only read but study them with attention, (for a cursory perusal is altogether useless,) in some other countries as well as my own.

KINNEIL HOUSE, *April* 16, 1828.

*P.S.**—As my Lectures were addressed to young men fresh from the study of the learned languages, I attempted often to strengthen and adorn my argument with such passages from Cicero and other ancients as left the deepest impression on my own memory, and which I therefore conceived to be most likely to awaken classical associations in the minds of my hearers, favourable to the truths which I wished to inculcate. Many of these passages I have retained in these volumes. I regret that the state of my health did not enable me to accompany all of them with an English version. But should a second edition of this work ever be called for, I flatter myself that some friendly hand will supply my omissions. If my very worthy and very learned friend James Glassford, Esq., should ever be able to spare a few days from his more important engagements, I doubt not that his friendship for me will induce him, by lending me the assistance of his skilful and elegant pen, to add one favour more to those of a similar kind for which I am already indebted to him.†

* [The following P.S., apparently an after-thought, was in the former edition subjoined to the last volume of this work. But as it seems more appropriate as a conclusion of the Preface, it is accordingly so placed.—*Ed.*]

† [Mr. Stewart refers to translations by Mr. Glassford of various Latin passages from Bacon, quoted in the first volume of the *Elements*, and which I find extant among his papers. Mr. Glassford published, in 1844, *Bacon's Novum Organum translated*, but the version was finished in 1812; and "the approbation of Mr. Stewart, by whom an early part of the manuscript was read, became," as the author informs us, "one of the chief inducements for continuing the task."—*Ed.*]

THE PHILOSOPHY

OF THE

ACTIVE AND MORAL POWERS OF MAN.

INTRODUCTION.

In my former work on the Human Mind I confined my attention almost exclusively to Man considered as an *intellectual being*: and attempted an analysis of those faculties and powers which compose that part of his nature commonly called his *intellect*, or his *understanding*. It is by these faculties that he acquires his knowledge of external objects; that he investigates truth in the sciences; that he combines means in order to attain the ends he has in view; and that he reasons or his fellow-creatures the acquisitions he has made. A being might, I think, be conceived possessed of these principles without any of the active propensities belonging to our species, at least without any of them but the principle of curiosity,—a being formed only for speculation, without any determination to the pursuit of particular external objects, and whose whole happiness consisted in intellectual gratifications.

But, although such a being might perhaps be conceived to exist, and although, in studying our mental frame, it be convenient to treat of our intellectual powers apart from our active propensities, yet, in fact, the two are very intimately, and indeed inseparably, connected in all our mental operations. I already

hinted, that, even in our speculative inquiries, the principle of curiosity is necessary to account for the exertion we make; and it is still more obvious that a combination of means to accomplish particular ends presupposes some determination of our nature, which makes the attainment of these ends desirable. Our active propensities, therefore, are the motives which induce us to exert our intellectual powers; and our intellectual powers are the instruments by which we attain the ends recommended to us by our active propensities:

"Reason the card, but Passion is the gale."

It will afterwards appear, that our active propensities are not only necessary to produce our intellectual exertions, but that the state of the intellectual powers, in the case of individuals, depends, in a great measure, on the strength of their propensities, and on the particular propensities which are predominant in the temper of their minds. A man of strong philosophical curiosity is likely to possess a much more cultivated and inventive understanding than another of equal natural capacity, destitute of the same stimulus. In like manner, the love of fame, or a strong sense of duty, may compensate for original defects, or may lay the foundation of uncommon attainments. The intellectual powers, too, may be variously modified by the habits arising from avarice, from the animal appetites, from ambition, or from the benevolent affections; insomuch that the moral principles of the miser, of the elegant voluptuary, of the political intriguer, and of the philanthropist, are not, perhaps, more dissimilar than the acquired capacities of their understandings, and the species of information with which their memories are stored. Among the various external indications of character, few circumstances will be found to throw more light on the ruling passions of individuals than the habitual direction of their studies, and the nature of those accomplishments which they have been ambitious to attain.

When Montaigne complains of "the difficulty he experienced in remembering the names of his servants; of his ignorance of the value of the French coins which he was daily handling:

and of his inability to distinguish the different kinds of grain from each other, both in the earth and in the granary;"[1] his observations, instead of proving the point which he supposed them to establish, (an original and incurable defect in his faculty of memory,) only afford an illustration of the little interest he took in things external, and of the preternatural and distempered engrossment of his thoughts with the phenomena of the internal world. To this peculiarity in his turn of mind he has himself alluded, when he says, "I study myself more than any other subject: This is my metaphysic; this my natural philosophy." A person well acquainted with the peculiarities of Montaigne's memory, might, I think, on comparing them with the general superiority of his mental powers, have anticipated him in this specification of the study which almost exclusively occupied his attention.[2]

Helvetius, in his book *De l'Esprit*, (a work which, among many paradoxical and some very pernicious opinions, contains a number of acute and lively observations,) has prosecuted, with considerable success, this last view of Human Nature, and has collected a variety of amusing facts to illustrate the influence of the passions on the intellectual powers. "It is the passions," he observes, "that rouse the soul from its natural tendency to rest, and surmount the *vis inertiæ* to which it is always inclined to yield; and it is the *strong* passions alone that prompt men to the execution of those heroic actions, and give birth to those sublime ideas, which command the admiration of ages.

[1] Montaigne's *Essays*, Book II. chap. xvii.

[2] The following remarks of the learned and ingenious Dr. Jortin are not unworthy of the attention of those whose taste leads them to the observation and study of character.

"From the complexion of those anecdotes which a man collects from others, or which he forms by his own pen, may, without much difficulty, be conjectured what manner of man he was.

"The human being is mightily given to assimilation, and, from the stories which any one relates with spirit, from the general tenor of his conversation, and from the books or associates to which he most addicts his attention, the inference cannot be far distant as to the texture of his mind, the vein of his wit, or, may we add, the ruling passion of his heart."—Jortin's *Tracts*, Vol. I. p. 445.

"It is the strength of passion alone that can enable men to defy dangers, pain, and death.

"It is the passions, too, which, by keeping up a perpetual fermentation in our minds, fertilize the same ideas, which, in more phlegmatic temperaments, are barren, and resemble seed scattered on a rock.

"It is the passions which, having strongly fixed our attention on the object of our desire, lead us to view it under aspects unknown to other men; and which, consequently, prompt heroes to plan and execute those hardy enterprises which must always appear ridiculous to the multitude till the sagacity of their authors has been evinced by success." [1]

To this passage, which is, I think, just in the main, I have only to object, that, in consequence of the ambiguity of the word *passion*, it is apt to suggest an erroneous idea of the author's meaning. It is plain that he uses it to denote our active principles in general; and, in this sense, there can be no doubt that his doctrine is well founded; inasmuch as, without such principles as curiosity, the love of fame, ambition, avarice, or the love of mankind, our intellectual capacities would for ever remain sterile and useless. But it is not in this sense that the word *passion* is most commonly employed. In its ordinary acceptation it denotes those animal impulses which, although they may sometimes prompt to intellectual exertion, are certainly on the whole unfavourable to intellectual improvement. Helvetius himself has not always attended to this ambiguity of language; and hence may be traced many of the paradoxes and errors of his philosophy.

To these slight remarks it may not be useless to subjoin an observation of La Rochefoucauld, which is equally refined and just; and which, in its practical tendency, calls the attention to a source of danger in a quarter where it is too seldom apprehended. "It is a mistake to believe that none but the violent passions, such as ambition and love, are able to triumph over the other active principles. Laziness, as languid as it is, often gets the mastery of them all; overrules all the designs and

[1] *De l'Esprit*, Discours III. chap. vi.

actions of life, and insensibly consumes and destroys both passions and virtues."*

From the foregoing observations it appears, that, in accounting for the diversities of genius and of intellectual character among men, important lights may be derived from an examination of their active propensities. It is of more consequence for me, however, to remark at present the intimate relation which an analysis of these propensities bears to the theory of morals, and its practical connexion with our opinions on the duties and the happiness of human life. Indeed it is in this way alone that the light of nature enables us to form any reasonable conclusions concerning the ends and destination of our being, and the purposes for which we were sent into the world:

"Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur."[1]

It forms, therefore, a necessary introduction to the science of ethics, or rather is the foundation on which that science rests.

In prosecuting our inquiries into the Active and the Moral Powers of Man, I propose, *first*, to attempt a classification and analysis of the most important principles belonging to this part of our constitution; and, *secondly*, to treat of the various branches of our duty. Under the former of these heads, my principal aim will be to illustrate the essential distinction between those active principles which originate in man's rational nature, and those which urge him, by a blind and instinctive impulse, to their respective objects.

In general, it may be here remarked, that the word *action* is properly applied to those exertions which are consequent on volition, whether the exertion be made on external objects, or be confined to our mental operations. Thus we say the mind is active when engaged in study. In ordinary discourse, indeed, we are apt to confound together action and motion. As the operations in the minds of other men escape our notice, we can judge of their activity only from the sensible effects it produces; and hence we are led to apply the character of activity

* [*Maximes.*]

[1] Persius, *Sat.* iii. 67.

to those whose bodily activity is the most remarkable, and to distinguish mankind into two classes, the active and the speculative. In the present instance, the word *active* is used in its most extensive signification, as applicable to every voluntary exertion.

According to the definition now given of the word *action*, the primary sources of our activity are the circumstances in which the acts of the will originate. Of these there are some which make a part of our constitution, and which, on that account, are called Active Principles. Such are hunger, thirst, the appetite which unites the sexes, curiosity, ambition, pity, resentment. These active principles are also called powers of the will, because, by stimulating us in *various* ways to action, they afford exercise to our sense of duty and our other rational principles of action, and give occasion to our voluntary determinations as free agents.

The study of this part of our constitution, although it may at first view seem to lie more open to our examination than the powers of the understanding, is attended with some difficulties peculiar to itself. For this various reasons may be assigned; among which there are two that seem principally to claim our attention:—1. When we wish to examine the nature of any of our intellectual principles we can at all times subject the faculty in question to the scrutiny of *reflection;* and can institute whatever experiments with respect to it may be necessary for ascertaining its general laws. It is characteristical of all our operations, purely intellectual, to leave the mind cool and undisturbed, so that the *exercise* of the faculties concerned in them does not prevent us from an analytical investigation of their theory. The case is very different with our active powers, particularly with those which, from their violence and impetuosity, have the greatest influence on human happiness. When we are under the dominion of the power, or, in plainer language, when we are hurried by *passion* to the pursuit of a particular end, we feel no inclination to speculate concerning the mental phenomena. When the tumult subsides, and our curiosity is awakened concerning the past, the moment for observation and

experiment is lost, and we are obliged to search for our facts in an imperfect recollection of what was viewed, even in the *first* instance, through the most troubled and deceitful of all *media*.

Something connected with this is the following remark of Mr. Hume: "Moral philosophy has this peculiar disadvantage, which is not to be found in natural, that, in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty that may arise. When I am at a loss to know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation, and observe what results from it. But should I endeavour to clear up, after the same manner, any doubts in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident, that this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon. We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures."[1]

2. Another circumstance which adds much to the difficulty of this branch of study, is the great variety of our active principles, and the endless diversity of their combinations in the characters of men. The same action may proceed from very different, and even opposite motives in the case of two individuals, and even in the same individual on different occasions; —or, an action which in one man proceeds from a single motive, may, in another, proceed from a number of motives conspiring together and modifying each other's effects. The philosophers who have speculated on this subject, have in general been misled by an excessive love of simplicity, and have attempted to explain the phenomena from the smallest possible number of data. Overlooking the real complication of our active principles, they have sometimes fixed on a single one, (good or bad, according as they were disposed to think well or

[1] *Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. I., [Introduction,] pp. 9, 10, 1st edit.

ill of human nature,) and have deduced from it a plausible explanation of all the varieties of human character and conduct.

Our inquiries on this subject must be conducted in one of two ways, either by studying the characters of other men, or by studying our own. In the former way, we may undoubtedly collect many useful hints, and many facts to confirm or to limit our conclusions; but the conjectures we form concerning the motives of others are liable to so much uncertainty, that it is chiefly by attending to what passes in our own minds that we can reasonably hope to ascertain the general laws of our constitution as active and moral beings.

Even this plan of study, however, as I already hinted, requires uncommon perseverance, and still more uncommon candour. The difficulty is great of attending to any of the operations of the mind; but this difficulty is much increased in those cases in which we are led by vanity or timidity to fancy that we have an interest in concealing the truth from our own knowledge.

Most men, perhaps, are disposed, in consequence of these and some other causes, to believe themselves better than they really are; and a few, there is reason to suspect, go into the opposite extreme, from the influence of false systems of philosophy or religion, or from the gloomy views inspired by a morbid melancholy.

When to these considerations we add the endless metaphysical disputes on the subject of the will, and of man's free agency, it may easily be conceived that the field of inquiry upon which we are now to enter abounds with questions not less curious and intricate than any of those which have been hitherto under our review. In point of practical importance some of them will be found in a still higher degree entitled to our attention.

In the further prosecution of this subject, I shall avoid, as much as possible, all technical divisions and classifications, and shall content myself with the following enumeration of our Active Principles, which I hope will be found sufficiently distinct and comprehensive for our purposes.

1. Appetites.
2. Desires.
3. Affections.
4. Self-love.
5. The Moral Faculty.

The three first may be distinguished (for a reason which will afterwards appear) by the title of *Instinctive or Implanted Propensities;* the two last by the title of *Rational and Governing Principles of Action.*[1]

[1] In the above enumeration I have departed widely from Dr. Reid's language.—(See his *Essays on the Active Powers*, Essay III., Parts i., ii., iii.) This great philosopher, with whom I am always unwilling to differ, refers our active principles to three classes, the Mechanical, the Animal, and the Rational; using all these three words with what I think a very exceptionable latitude. My reasons for objecting to the use he makes of the words animal and rational will appear in the sequel. On this occasion I shall only observe, that the word *mechanical*, (under which he comprehends our *instincts and habits*,) cannot, in my opinion, be properly applied to any of our active principles. It is indeed used, in this instance, merely as a term of distinction; but it *seems* to imply some theory concerning the nature of the principles comprehended under it, and is apt to suggest incorrect notions on the subject. If I had been disposed to examine this part of our constitution with all the minute accuracy of which it is susceptible, I should have preferred the following arrangement to that which I have adopted, as well as to that proposed by Dr. Reid. 1. Of our *original* principles of action. 2. Of our *acquired* principles of action. The original principles of action may be subdivided into the *animal* and the *rational;* to the former of which classes our *instincts* ought undoubtedly to be referred, as well as our *appetites*. In Dr. Reid's arrangement, nothing appears more unaccountable, if not capricious, than to call our appetites *animal* principles, because they are common to man and to the brutes; and, at the same time, to distinguish our *instincts* by the title of *mechanical;*—when, of all our active propensities, there are none in which the nature of man bears so strong an analogy to that of the lower animals as in these instinctive impulses. Indeed, it is from the condition of the brutes that the word *instinct* is transferred to that of man by a sort of figure or metaphor.

Our *acquired* principles of action comprehend all those propensities to act which we acquire from habit. Such are our artificial appetites and artificial desires, and the various factitious motives of human conduct generated by association and fashion. At present, it being useless for any of the purposes which I have in view to attempt so comprehensive and detailed an examination of the subject, I shall confine myself to the general enumeration already mentioned. As our appetites, our desires, and our affections, whether original or acquired, stand in the same common relation to the Moral Faculty, (the illustration of which is the chief object of this volume,) I purposely avoid those slighter and less important subdivisions which might be thought to savour unnecessarily of scholastic subtilty.

BOOK FIRST.

OF OUR INSTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER I.

OF OUR APPETITES.

This class of our Active Principles is distinguished by the following circumstances:—

1. They take their rise from the body, and are common to us with the brutes.

2. They are not constant but occasional.

3. They are accompanied with an uneasy sensation, which is strong or weak in proportion to the strength or weakness of the appetite.

Our appetites are three in number, Hunger, Thirst, and the appetite of Sex. Of these, two were intended for the preservation of the individual; the third for the continuation of the species; and without them reason would have been insufficient for these important purposes. Suppose, for example, that the appetite of hunger had been no part of our constitution, reason and experience might have satisfied us of the necessity of food to our preservation; but how should we have been able, without an implanted principle, to ascertain, according to the varying state of our animal economy, the proper seasons for eating, or the quantity of food that is salutary to the body? The lower animals not only receive this information from nature, but are, moreover, directed by instinct to the particular sort of food that is proper for them to use in health and in

sickness. The senses of taste and smell, in the savage state of our species, are subservient, at least in some degree, to the same purpose.

Our appetites can, with no propriety, be called *selfish*, for they are directed to their respective objects as ultimate ends, and they must all have operated, *in the first instance*, prior to any experience of the pleasure arising from their gratification. *After* this experience, indeed, the desire of enjoyment will naturally come to be combined with the appetite; and it may sometimes lead us to stimulate or provoke the appetite with a view to the pleasure which is to result from indulging it. Imagination, too, and the association of ideas, together with the social affections, and sometimes the moral faculty, lend their aid, and all conspire together in forming a complex passion, in which the animal appetite is only one ingredient. In proportion as this passion is gratified, its influence over the conduct becomes the more irresistible, (for all the *active* determinations of our nature are strengthened by habit,) till at last we struggle in vain against its tyranny. A man so enslaved by his animal appetites exhibits humanity in one of its most miserable and contemptible forms.

As an additional proof of the misery of such a state, it is of great importance to remark, that, while habit strengthens all our *active* determinations, it diminishes the liveliness of our passive *impressions*;—a remarkable instance of which occurs in the effects produced by an immoderate use of strong liquors, which, at the same time that it confirms the active habit of intemperance, deadens and destroys the sensibility of the palate. In consequence of this law of our nature the evils of excessive indulgence are doubled, inasmuch as our sensibility to pleasure decays in proportion as the cravings of appetite increase.

In general, it will be found, that, wherever we attempt to enlarge the sphere of enjoyment beyond the limits prescribed by nature, we frustrate our own purpose.

A man so enslaved by his appetites may undoubtedly, in one sense, be called *selfish*; for, as he must necessarily neglect the duties he owes to others, he may be presumed to be deficient

in the benevolent affections. But it cannot be said of him that he is actuated by an inordinate *self-love*, (meaning by that word an excessive regard to his own happiness,) for he sacrifices to the meanest gratifications all the noblest pleasures of which he is susceptible, and sacrifices to the pleasure of the moment the permanent enjoyments of health, reputation, and conscience. This is true even when the desire of gratification is combined with the original appetite; for no two principles can be more widely at variance than the desire of gratification and the desire of happiness.

Of the errors introduced into morals, in consequence of the vague use of the words *selfishness* and *self-love*, I shall afterwards take notice. What I wish chiefly to remark at present is, that in no sense of these words can we refer to them the origin of our animal appetites; and that the active propensities comprehended under this title are ultimate facts in the human constitution.

Besides our natural appetites we have many acquired ones. Such are our appetite for tobacco, for opium, and for other intoxicating drugs. In general, everything that stimulates the nervous system produces a subsequent languor, which gives rise to a desire of repetition.

The universality of this appetite for intoxicating drugs is a curious fact in the history of our species. "It seems," says Dr. Robertson, "to have been one of the first exertions of human ingenuity to discover some composition of an intoxicating quality; and there is hardly any nation so rude, or so destitute of invention, as not to have succeeded in this fatal research. The most barbarous of the American tribes have been so unfortunate as to attain this art; and even those who are so deficient in knowledge as to be unacquainted with the method of giving an inebriating strength to liquors by fermentation can accomplish the same end by other means. The people of the islands of North America and of California used for this purpose the smoke of tobacco, drawn up with a certain instrument into the nostrils, the fumes of which ascending to the brain, they felt all the transports and frenzy of intoxica-

tion. In almost every part of the new world the natives possessed the art of extracting an intoxicating liquor from Maize, or the Manioc root, the same substances which they convert into bread. The operation by which they effect this nearly resembles the common one of brewing, but with this difference, that, instead of yeast, they use a nauseous infusion of maize or manioc chewed by their women. The saliva excites a vigorous fermentation, and in a few days the liquor becomes fit for drinking. It is not disagreeable to the taste, and, when swallowed in large quantities, is of an inebriating quality. This is the general beverage of the Americans, which they distinguish by different names, and for which they feel such a violent and insatiable desire, as it is not easy either to conceive or describe."[1]

Many striking confirmations of this remark occur in the voyages of Cook and of later navigators.

Our occasional propensities to action and to repose are, in many respects, analogous to our appetites. They have indeed all the three characteristics of our appetites already mentioned. They are common, too, to man and to the lower animals, and they operate, in our own species, in the most infant state of the individual. In general, every animal we know is prompted by an instinctive impulse to take that degree of exercise which is salutary to the body, and is prevented from passing the bounds of moderation by that languor and desire of repose which are the consequences of continued exertion.

There is something also very similar to this with respect to the mind. We are impelled by nature to the exercise of its different faculties, and we are warned, when we are in danger of overstraining them, by a consciousness of fatigue. After we are exhausted by a long course of application to business, how delightful are the first moments of indolence and repose! *O che bella cosa di far niente!* We are apt to imagine that no inducement shall again lead us to engage in the bustle of the world: but, after a short respite from our labours, our intellectual vigour returns; the mind rouses from its lethargy

[1] *History of America*, vol. i. p. 396, 4to edition.

"like a giant from his sleep," and we feel ourselves urged by an irresistible impulse to return to our duties as members of society.

The active principles already mentioned are common to man and to the brutes. But besides these the latter have some instinctive impulses of which I do not know that there are any traces to be found in the human race. Such are those *antipathies* which they discover against the natural enemies of their respective tribes. It is probable, I think, that their existence is guarded entirely by their appetites and antipathies; for the desire of self-preservation implies a degree of reason and reflection which they do not appear to possess. Even in the case of man this desire is probably the result of his experience of the pleasures which life affords; and, accordingly, (as Dr. Beattie very finely remarks,) Milton has, with exquisite judgment, represented *Adam*, in the first moments of his being, as contemplating, without anxiety or regret, the idea of immediate annihilation.

> "While thus I call'd, and stray'd I knew not whither.
> From where I first drew air, and first beheld
> This happy light; when answer none return'd,
> On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
> Pensive I sat me down: there gentle sleep
> *First* found me, and with soft oppression seiz'd
> My drowsed sense; UNTROUBLED, though I thought
> I then was passing to my former state
> Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve!"*

* [*Paradise Lost*, viii. 283.]

CHAPTER II.

OF OUR DESIRES.

Our Desires are distinguished from our Appetites by the following circumstances:—

1. They do not take their rise from the body.
2. They do not operate periodically after certain intervals, nor do they cease after the attainment of a particular object.

The most remarkable active principles belonging to this class are,—

1. The Desire of Knowledge, or the principle of Curiosity.[1]
2. The Desire of Society.
3. The Desire of Esteem.
4. The Desire of Power, or the principle of Ambition.
5. The Desire of Superiority, or the principle of Emulation.

SECT. I.—THE DESIRE OF KNOWLEDGE.

The principle of curiosity appears in children at a very early period, and is commonly proportioned to the degree of intellectual capacity they possess. The direction, too, which it takes is regulated by nature according to the order of our wants and necessities; being confined, in the first instance, exclusively to those properties of material objects, and those laws of the ma-

[1] I have already remarked, (see note, p. 125,) that in this part of his work Dr. Reid has used some terms with an undue latitude. Of this a very remarkable instance occurs in the use he has made of the adjective *Animal;* in consequence of which he has been led to rank among our *animal* principles of action, (that is, among the active principles common to man with the brutes,) not only the desire of knowledge and the desire of esteem, but pity to the distressed, patriotism, and other benevolent affections.

terial world, an acquaintance with which is essential to the preservation of our animal existence. Hence the instinctive eagerness with which children handle and examine everything which is presented to them; an employment which we are commonly apt to consider as a mere exercise of their animal powers, but which, if we reflect on the limited province of sight prior to experience, and on the early period of life at which we are able to judge by the eye of the distances and of the tangible qualities of bodies, will appear plainly to be the most useful occupation in which they could be engaged, if it were in the power of a philosopher to have the regulation of their attention from the hour of their birth. In more advanced years, curiosity displays itself in one way or another in every individual, and gives rise to an infinite diversity in their pursuits,—engrossing the attention of one man about physical causes—of another about mathematical truths—of a third about historical facts—of a fourth about the objects of natural history—of a fifth about the transactions of private families, or about the politics and news of the day.

Whether this diversity be owing to natural predisposition, or to early education, it is of little consequence to determine, as, upon either supposition, a preparation is made for it in the original constitution of the mind, combined with the circumstances of our external situation. Its final cause is also sufficiently obvious, as it is this which gives rise, in the case of individuals, to a limitation of attention and study, and lays the foundation of all the advantages which society derives from the division and subdivision of intellectual labour.

These advantages are so great, that some philosophers have attempted to resolve the desire of knowledge into self-love. But to this theory the same objection may be stated which was already made to the attempts of some philosophers to account, in a similar way, for the origin of our appetites; that all of these are active principles, manifestly directed by nature to particular specific objects, as their ultimate ends;—that, as the object of hunger is not happiness but food, so the object of curiosity is not happiness but knowledge. To this analogy

Cicero has very beautifully alluded, when he calls knowledge the natural food of the understanding. "Est animorum ingeniorumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturæ."* We can, indeed, conceive a being prompted merely by the cool desire of happiness to accumulate information; but, in a creature like man, endowed with a variety of other active principles, the stock of his knowledge would probably have been scanty, unless self-love had been aided in this particular by the principle of curiosity.

Although, however, the desire of knowledge is not resolvable into self-love, it is not in itself an object of *moral approbation*. A person may indeed employ his intellectual powers with a view to his own moral improvement, or to the happiness of society, and so far he acts from a laudable principle. But to prosecute study merely from the desire of knowledge is neither virtuous nor vicious. When not suffered to interfere with our duties it is morally innocent. The virtue or vice does not lie in the desire, but in the proper or improper regulation of it. The ancient astronomer who, when accused of indifference with respect to public transactions, answered that *his* country was in the heavens, acted criminally, inasmuch as he suffered his desire of knowledge to interfere with the duties which he owed to mankind.

At the same time it must be admitted, that the desire of knowledge (and the same observation is applicable to our other desires) is of a more dignified nature than those appetites which are common to us with the brutes. A thirst for science has been always considered as a mark of a liberal and elevated mind; and it generally co-operates with the moral faculty in forming us to those habits of self-government which enable us to keep our animal appetites in due subjection.

There is another circumstance which renders this desire peculiarly estimable, that it is always accompanied with a strong desire to communicate our knowledge to others; insomuch, that it has been doubted if the principle of curiosity would be sufficiently powerful to animate the intellectual exer-

* [*Acad. Quæst.* Lib. IV. c. xli.]

St. Albert's College Library

tions of any man in a long course of persevering study, if he had no prospect of being ever able to impart his acquisitions to his friends or to the public. "Si quis in cœlum ascendisset," says Cicero, "naturamque mundi et pulchritudinem siderum perspexisset, insuavem illam admirationem ei fore, quæ jucundissima fuisset, si aliquem cui narraret habuisset. Sic natura solitarium nihil amat, semperque ad aliquod quasi adminiculum annititur, quod in amicissimo quoque dulcissimum est."[1] And to the same purpose Seneca: "Nec me ulla res delectabit, licet eximia sit et salutaris, quam mihi uni sciturus sim. Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam, nec enunciem, rejiciam: nullius boni, sine socio, jucunda possessio est."[2]

A strong curiosity, properly directed, may be justly considered as one of the most important elements in philosophical genius; and, accordingly, there is no circumstance of greater consequence in education than to keep the curiosity always awake, and to turn it to useful pursuits. I cannot help, therefore, disapproving greatly of a very common practice in this country, that of communicating to children general and superficial views of science and history by means of popular introductions. In this way we rob their future studies of all that interest which can render study agreeable, and reduce the mind, in the pursuits of science, to the same state of listlessness and languor as when we toil through the pages of a tedious novel, after being made acquainted with the final catastrophe.

It would contribute greatly to the culture and the guidance of this principle of curiosity, if the different sciences were taught as much as possible in the order of the *analytic* rather than in that of the *synthetic* method; a plan, however, which I readily admit it is not so practicable to carry into effect in a course of public as of private instruction. Such a mode of education too would be attended with the additional advantage of accustoming the student to the proper method of investigation; and thereby preparing him in due time to enter on the career of invention and discovery. Nor is this all. It would impress

[1] *De Amicitia*, [c. xxiii.]

[2] Seneca, *Epistola* vi.

the knowledge he thus acquired, in some measure by his own ingenuity, much more deeply on his *memory*, than if it were passively imbibed from books or teachers;—in the same manner as the windings of a road make a more lasting impression on the mind, when we have once travelled it alone, and inquired out the way at every turn, than if we had travelled along it an hundred times, trusting ourselves implicitly to the guidance of a companion.

I am happy to be confirmed in this opinion by its coincidence with what has been excellently remarked on the same subject by Miss Edgeworth, in her treatise on *Practical Education*;[1] a work equally distinguished by good sense, and by originality of thought. The passage I allude to more particularly at present, is the short dialogue about *the steam-engine, as improved by Mr. Watt.*

SECT. II.—THE DESIRE OF SOCIETY.

Abstracting from those affections which interest us in the happiness of others, and from all the advantages which we ourselves derive from the social union, we are led by a natural and instinctive desire to associate with our species. This principle is easily discernible in the minds of children long before the dawn of reason. "Attend only," says an intelligent and accurate observer, "to the eyes, the features, and the gestures of a child on the breast when another child is presented to it;—both instantly, previous to the possibility of instruction or habit, exhibit the most evident expressions of joy. Their eyes sparkle, and their features and gestures demonstrate, in the most unequivocal manner, a mutual attachment. When farther advanced, children, who are strangers to each other, though their social appetite be equally strong, discover a mutual shyness of approach, which, however, is soon conquered by the more powerful instinct of association."[2]

In the lower animals, too, very evident traces of the same instinct appear. In some of these we observe a species of

[1] *Practical Education*, Vol. I. p. 592, *et seq.*, 4to edition.

[2] Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History*, p. 416.

union strikingly analogous to political associations among men: in others we observe occasional unions among individuals to accomplish a particular purpose,—to repel, for example, a hostile assault;—but there are also various tribes which discover a desire of society, and a pleasure in the company of their own species, without an apparent reference to any farther end. Thus we frequently see horses, when confined alone in an enclosure, neglect their food and break the fences to join their companions in the contiguous field. Every person must have remarked the spirit and alacrity with which this animal exerts himself on the road, when accompanied by another animal of his own species, in comparison of what he discovers when travelling alone; and, with respect to oxen and cows, it has been asserted, that even in the finest pasture they do not fatten so rapidly in a solitary state as when they feed together in a herd.

What is the final cause of the associating instinct in such animals as have now been mentioned, it is not easy to conjecture, unless we suppose that it was intended merely to augment the sum of their enjoyments. But whatever opinion we may form on this point, it is indisputable that the instinctive determination is a strong one, and that it produces striking effects on the habits of the animal, even when external circumstances are the most unfavourable to its operation. Horses and oxen, for example, when deprived of companions of their own species, associate and become attached to each other. The same thing sometimes happens between individuals that belong to tribes naturally hostile; as between dogs and cats, or between a cat and a bird.

If these facts be candidly considered, there will appear but little reason to doubt the existence of the social instinct in our own species, when it is so agreeable to the general analogy of nature, as displayed through the rest of the animal creation. As this point, however, has been controverted warmly by authors of eminence, it will be necessary to consider it with some attention.

The question with respect to the social or the solitary nature

of man seems to me to amount to this, whether man has any disinterested principles which lead him to unite with his fellow-creatures; or whether the social union be the result of prudential views of self-interest, suggested by the experience of his own insufficiency to procure the objects of his natural desires. Of these two opinions Hobbes has maintained the latter, and has endeavoured to establish it by proving, that in what he calls the state of nature every man is an enemy to his brother, and that it was the experience of the evils arising from these hostile dispositions that induced men to unite in a political society. In proof of this he insists on the terror which children feel at the sight of a stranger; on the apprehension which, he says, a person naturally feels when he hears the tread of a foot in the dark; on the universal invention of locks and keys; and on various other circumstances of a similar nature.

That this theory of Hobbes is contrary to the universal history of mankind cannot be disputed. Man has always been found in a social state; and there is reason even for thinking, that the principles of union which nature has implanted in his heart operate with the greatest force in those situations in which the advantages of the social union are the smallest. As society advances, the relations among individuals are continually multiplied, and man is rendered the more necessary to man: But it may be doubted, if, in a period of great refinement, the social affections be as warm and powerful as when the species were wandering in the forest.

Besides, it does not seem to be easy to conceive in what manner Hobbes's supposition could be realized. Surely, if there be a foundation for anything laid in the constitution of man's nature it is for family union. The infant of our species continues longer in a helpless state, and requires longer the protecting care of both parents, than the young of any other animal. Before the first child is able to provide for itself a second and a third are produced, and thus the union of the sexes, supposing it at first to have been merely casual, is insensibly confirmed by habit, and cemented by the common interest which both parents take in their offspring. So just is the

simple and beautiful statement of the fact given by Montesquieu, "That man is born in society, and there he remains."

From these considerations, it appears that the social union does not take its rise from views of self-interest, but that it forms a necessary part of the condition of man from the constitution of his nature. It is true, indeed, that before he begins to reflect he finds himself connected with society by a thousand ties; so that, independently of any social instinct, prudence would undoubtedly prevent him from abandoning his fellow-creatures. But still it is evident that the social instinct forms a part of human nature, and has a tendency to unite men even when they stand in no need of each other's assistance. Were the case otherwise, prudence and the social disposition would be only different names for the same principle, whereas it is matter of common remark, that although the two principles be by no means inconsistent when kept within reasonable bounds, yet that the former, when it rises to any excess, is in a great measure exclusive of the latter. I hinted, too, already, that it is in societies where individuals are most independent of each other as to their animal wants, that the social principles operate with the greatest force.

According to the view of the subject now given, the multiplied wants and necessities of man in his infant state, by laying the foundation of the family union, impose upon our species, as a necessary part of their condition, those social connexions which are so essential to our improvement and happiness. And therefore, nothing could be more unphilosophical than the complaints which the ancient Epicureans founded upon this circumstance, and which Lucretius has so pathetically expressed in the following verses:—

> "Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
> Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
> Vitali auxilio, cum primum in luminis oras
> Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit:
> Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum est,
> Cui tantum in vitâ restat transire malorum."[1]

[1] Lib. V. l. 223.

The philosophy of Pope is, in this respect, much more pleasing and much more solid:*

> "Heaven forming each on other to depend,
> A master, or a servant, or a friend,
> Bids each on other for assistance call,
> Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
> Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
> The common interest, or endear the tie.
> To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
> Each home-felt joy, that life inherits here."[1]

The considerations now stated afford a beautiful illustration of the beneficent design with which the physical condition of man is adapted to the principles of his moral constitution; an adaptation so striking, that it is not surprising those philosophers, who are fond of simplifying the theory of human nature, should have attempted to account for the origin of these principles from the habits which our external circumstances impose. In this, as in many other instances, their attention has been misled by the spirit of system from those wonderful combinations of means to particular ends, which are everywhere conspicuous in the universe. It is not by the physical condition of man that the essential principles of his mind are formed; but the one is fitted to the other by the same superintending wisdom which adapts the fin of the fish to the water, and the wing of the bird to the air, and which scatters the seeds of the vegetable tribes in those soils and exposures where they are fitted to vegetate. It is not the wants and necessities of his animal being which *create* his social principles, and which produce an artificial and interested league among individuals who are naturally solitary and hostile; but, determined by instinct to society, endowed with innumerable principles which have a reference to his fellow-creatures, he is placed by the condition of his birth in that element, where alone the perfection and happiness of his nature are to be found.

In speaking of the lower animals, I before observed, that such of them as are instinctively social discover the secret

* [*Essay on Man*, Ep. ii. 249.]

[1] See on this subject the *Moralists* of Lord Shaftesbury.

workings of nature even when removed from the society of their kind. This fact amounts, in *their* case, to a demonstration of that mutual adaptation of the different parts of nature to each other which I have just remarked. It demonstrates that the structure of their *internal* frame is purposely adjusted to that *external* scene in which they are destined to be placed. As the lamb, when it strikes with its forehead while yet unarmed, proves that it is not its weapons which determine its instincts, but that it has pre-existent instincts suited to its weapons, so when we see an animal, deprived of the sight of his fellows, cling to a stranger, or disarm, by his caresses, the rage of an enemy, we perceive the workings of a social instinct, not only not superinduced by external circumstances, but manifesting itself in spite of circumstances which are adverse to its operation. The same remark may be extended to man. When in solitude he languishes, and by making companions of the lower animals, or by attaching himself to inanimate objects, strives to fill up the void of which he is conscious. "Were I in a desert," (says an author who, amid all his extravagances and absurdities, sometimes writes like a *wise* man, and, where the moral feelings are at all concerned, never fails to write like a *good* man)—"Were I in a desert, I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections. If I could not do better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect myself to; I would court their shade, and greet them kindly for their protection. I would cut my name upon them, and swear they were the loveliest trees throughout the desert. If their leaves withered, I would teach myself to mourn, and when they rejoiced, I would rejoice along with them."

The Count de Lauzun was confined by Louis XIV. for nine years in the Castle of Pignerol, in a small room where no light could enter but from a chink in the roof. In this solitude he attached himself to a spider, and contrived for some time to amuse himself with attempting to tame it, with catching flies for its support, and with superintending the progress of its web. The jailer discovered his amusement, and killed the spider; and the Count used afterwards to declare, that the pang he felt on

the occasion could be compared only to that of a mother for the loss of a child.[1]

This anecdote is quoted by Lord Kames in his *Sketches*, and by the late Lord Auckland in his *Principles of Penal Law*. It is remarkable that both these learned and respectable writers should have introduced it into their works on account of the shocking incident of the jailer, and as a proof of the pure and unprovoked malice of which some minds are capable, without taking any notice of it as a beautiful picture of the feelings of a man of sensibility in a state of solitude, and of his disposition to create to himself some object upon which he may rest those affections which have a reference to society.

It will be said that *these* are the feelings of one who has experienced the pleasures of social life, and that no inference can be drawn from such facts in opposition to Hobbes. But if they do not prove in man an instinctive impulse towards society prior to experience, they at least prove that he feels a delight in the society of his fellow-creatures, which no view of self-interest is sufficient to explain.

It does not belong to our present speculation to illustrate the importance of the social union to our improvement and our happiness. Its subserviency to both, (abstracting entirely from its necessity for the complete gratification of our physical wants,) is much greater than we should be disposed at first to apprehend. In proof of this, it is sufficient to mention here its connexion with the culture of our intellectual faculties, and with the development of our moral principles. Illustrations of this may be drawn from the low state in which both these parts of our nature are generally found in the deaf and dumb, and from the effects which a few months' education sometimes has in unfolding their mental powers. The pleasing change which in the meantime takes place in their once vacant counte-

[1] In Delille's poem on *the Imagination*, the same anecdote, which is here told of the Count de Lauzun, is attributed to Pelisson, a celebrated literary and political character in the reign of Louis XIV., who was confined four years in the Bastille, on account of his connexion with the disgraced minister *Foucquet*. See end of Chant vi.

nances, when animated and lighted up by an active and inquisitive mind, cannot escape the notice of the most careless observer.[1]

[1] For an additional illustration of the same thing, see a remarkable case of recovery from deafness and dumbness in the history of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris for the year 1703.

A doctrine similar to that which I have now been controverting, concerning the origin of society, was maintained by some of the ancient sophists, and has found advocates in every age among those writers who wished to depreciate human nature, as well as among many who were anxious to represent man as entirely the creature of education and government, with the view of inculcating implicit and passive obedience to the civil magistrate. In Buchanan's elegant and philosophical Dialogue *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, the question is particularly discussed between the two *interlocutors*, of whom the one ascribes the origin of society to views of utility, (meaning by *utility* the private interest or advantage of the individual:)

"*——Ipsa utilitas, justi prope mater et æqui,*"

Quæ cœtus hominum primum congregavit, ac jussit,

"*Communi dare signa tuba, defendier iisdem*
Turribus, atque unâ portarum clave teneri."

In opposition to which doctrine, Buchanan himself, who is the other speaker, contends with great warmth for the existence of social principles in the nature of man, which, independently of any views of interest, lay a foundation for the social union. In the course of his argument on this subject he touches on most of the considerations which have been stated above.

"Magnam profecto videtur quibusdam *utilitas* habere vim, ad societatem publicam humani generis et constituendam et continendam. Sed est, nisi fallor, congregandorum hominum causa longe antiquior, et communitatis eorum inter ipsos multo prius et sanctius vinculum. Alioqui, si commodi sui privatim quisque velit habere rationem, vide, ne illa ipsa utilitas solveret potius quam conjungeret humanam societatem.

"Ea est quædam naturæ vis, non hominibus modo, sed mansuetioribus etiam aliorum animantium indita, ut si etiam absint utilitatis illa blandimenta, tamen cum sui generis animantibus libenter congregentur. At de cæteris in præsentia nihil attinet disputare: homini certe a natura hanc vim tam videmus alte impressam, ut si quis omnibus iis rebus abundet, quæ vel ad incolumitatem tuendam, vel ad voluptatem et animorum oblectationem comparatæ sunt, sine hominum commercio vitam sibi insuavem sit existimaturus. Quin et illi ipsi, qui cupiditate scientiæ, et studio veri investigandi se a turba removerunt, et in secretos abdiderunt recessus, neque perpetuam animi con tentionem ferre diutius potuerunt: nec, si quando eam remisissent, in solitudine se continere poterant: sed illa ipsa secreta sua studia libenter proferebant; et velut in communem utilitatem elaborassent, in medium conferebant sui laboris fructum. Quod si quis est, qui omnino solitudine capiatur, cœtusque hominum fugiat ac devitet, id magis animi morbo quam vi naturæ, fieri existimo; qualem Timonen Atheniensem accepimus, et Corinthium Bellerophontem;

"Qui miser Elæis errabat solus in oris,
Ipse suum cor edens, hominum vestigia vitans.

The foregoing passage seems to me curious, as it shows how completely

SECT. III.—THE DESIRE OF ESTEEM.

This principle, as well as those we have now been considering, discovers itself at a very early period in infants, who, long before they are able to reflect on *the advantages* resulting from the good opinion of others, and even before they acquire the use of speech, are sensibly mortified by an expression of neglect or contempt. It seems, therefore, to be *an original principle of our nature*, that is, it does not appear to be resolvable into reason and experience, or into any other principle more general than itself. An additional proof of this is the very powerful influence it has over the mind,—an influence more striking than that of any other active principle whatsoever. Even the love of life daily gives way to the desire of esteem, and of an esteem which, as it is only to affect our memories, cannot be supposed to interest our self-love. In what manner the association of ideas should manufacture, out of the other principles of our constitution, a new principle stronger than them all, it is difficult to conceive.

In these observations I have had an eye to the theories of those modern philosophers who represent self-love, or the desire of happiness, as the only original principle of action in man, and who attempt to account for the origin of *all* our other active principles from habit or the association of ideas. That this theory is just in some instances cannot be disputed. Thus, in the case of *avarice* it is manifest that it is from habit alone it derives its influence over the mind; for no man surely was ever brought into the world with an innate love of money Money is at first desired, merely as the means of obtaining other objects; but, in consequence of being long and constantly accustomed to direct our efforts to its attainment on account of its apprehended utility, we come at last to pursue it as an ultimate end, and frequently retain our attachment to it long

Buchanan had not only anticipated, but refuted the very far-fetched argument which Hobbes was soon after to draw from his supposed state of nature in support of his slavish maxims of government.

after we have lost all relish for the enjoyments it enables us to command. In like manner it has been supposed that the esteem of our fellow-creatures is at first desired on account of its apprehended utility, and that it comes in time to be pursued as an ultimate end, without any reference on our part to the advantages it bestows. In opposition to this doctrine it seems to me to be clear, that as the object of hunger is not happiness but food; as the object of curiosity is not happiness but knowledge; so the object of this principle of action is not happiness, but the esteem and respect of other men. That this is not inconsistent with the analogy of our nature appears from the observations already made on our appetites and desires; and that it really is the fact may be proved by various arguments. Before touching, however, on these, I must remark, that I consider this as merely a question of speculative curiosity; for, upon either supposition, the desire of esteem is equally the work of nature; and consequently, upon either supposition, it is equally unphilosophical to attempt, by metaphysical subtleties, to counteract her wise and beneficent purposes.

Among the different arguments which concur to prove that the desire of esteem is not wholly resolvable into the association of ideas, one of the strongest has already been hinted at,—the early period of life at which this principle discovers itself—long before we are able to form the idea of *happiness*, far less to judge of the circumstances which have a tendency to promote it. The difference in this respect between avarice and the desire of esteem is remarkable. The former is the vice of old age, and is, comparatively speaking, confined to a few. The latter is one of the most powerful engines in the education of children, and is not less universal in its influence than the principle of curiosity.

The desire, too, of *posthumous* fame, of which no man can entirely divest himself, furnishes an insurmountable objection to the theories already mentioned. It is indeed an objection so obvious to the common sense of mankind, that all the philosophers who have leaned to these theories have employed their ingenuity in attempting to resolve this desire into an illusion

of the imagination produced by habit. This, too, was the opinion of an excellent writer, and still more excellent man, Mr. Wollaston, who, from a well-meant, but very mistaken zeal to weaken the influence of this principle of action on human conduct, has been at pains to give as ludicrous an account as possible of its origin. As I differ widely from Wollaston on this point, both in his theoretical speculations, and in the practical inferences he deduces from them, I shall quote the passage at length, and then subjoin a few remarks on it.

"Men please themselves with notions of immortality, and fancy a perpetuity of fame secured to themselves by books and testimonies of historians; but alas! it is a stupid delusion when they imagine themselves *present* and *enjoying* that fame at the reading of their story after their death. And beside, in reality, the man is not known ever the more to posterity, because his name is transmitted to them: *He* doth not live, because his *name* does. When it is said Julius Cæsar subdued Gaul, beat Pompey, and changed the Roman commonwealth into a monarchy, it is the same thing as to say the conqueror of Pompey was Cæsar; that is, Cæsar and the conqueror of Pompey are the same thing, and Cæsar is as much known by the one designation as by the other. The amount then is only this, that the conqueror of Pompey conquered Pompey, or somebody conquered Pompey; or rather, since Pompey is now as little known as Cæsar, somebody conquered somebody. Such a poor business is this boasted immortality; and such as has been described is the thing called glory among us! The notion of it may serve to excite them who having abilities to serve their country in time of real danger or want, or to do some other good, have yet not philosophy enough to do this upon principles of virtue, or to see through the glories of the world, (just as we excite children by praising them, and as we see many good inventions and improvements proceed from emulation and vanity;) but to discerning men this fame is mere air, and the next remove from nothing, which they despise, if not shun. I think there are two considerations which

may justify a desire of *some* glory or honour, and scarce more. When men have performed any *virtuous* actions, or such as sit easy on their memories, it is a reasonable pleasure to have the testimony of the world added to that of their own consciences, that they have done well. And more than that, if the reputation acquired by any qualification or action may produce a man any *real* comfort or advantage, (if it be only protection from the insolence and injustice of mankind, or if it enables him, by his authority, to do more good to others,) to have this privilege must be a great satisfaction, and what a wise and good man may be allowed, as he has opportunity, to propose to himself. But then he proposes it no further than it may be *useful*, and it can be no further useful than he wants it. So that, upon the whole, glory, praise, and the like, are either mere vanity, or only valuable in proportion to defects and wants."[1]

It appears from this passage that Wollaston does not consider the desire of posthumous fame as an ultimate fact in our nature, for he proposes a theory to account for it. "It is," says he, "a stupid delusion, when men imagine themselves *present* and enjoying that fame at the reading of their story after death." Mr. Smith, too, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, *seems* to think that the desire of a posthumous fame is to be resolved into an illusion of the imagination. "Men," says he, "have often voluntarily thrown away life to acquire after death a renown which they could no longer enjoy. Their imagination, in the meantime, anticipated that fame which was thereafter to be bestowed upon them; those applauses which they were never to hear rang in their ears; the thoughts of that admiration whose effects they were never to feel, played about their hearts, banished from their breasts the strongest of all natural fears, and transported them to perform actions which seem almost beyond the reach of human nature."* But why have recourse to an illusion of the imagination to account for a principle which the wisest of men find it impossible to

[1] *Wollaston's Religion of Nature Delineated*, pp. 215-217, 8th edit. See Note A, at the end of this volume.

* [Part III. chap. ii.]

extinguish in themselves, or even sensibly to weaken; and none more remarkably than some of those who have employed their ingenuity in attempting to turn it into ridicule? Is it possible that men should imagine themselves *present* and enjoying their fame at the reading of their story after death, without being conscious of this operation of the imagination themselves? Is not this to depart from the plain and obvious appearance of the fact, and to adopt refinements similar to those by which the selfish philosophers explain away all our disinterested affections? We might as well suppose that a man's regard for the welfare of his posterity and friends after his death does not arise from natural affection, but from an illusion of the imagination, leading him to suppose himself still present with them, and a witness of their prosperity.[1] If we have confessedly various other propensities directed to specific objects as ultimate ends, where is the difficulty of conceiving that a desire, directed to the good opinion of our fellow-creatures, (without any reference to the advantages it is to yield us either now or hereafter,) may be among the number?

It would not indeed (as I have already hinted) materially affect the argument, although we should suppose with Wollaston, that the desire of posthumous fame was resolvable into an illusion of the imagination. For, whatever be its origin, it was plainly the intention of nature that all men should be in some measure under its influence; and it is perhaps of little consequence whether we regard it as a principle originally im-

[1] The two cases seem to be so exactly parallel, that it is somewhat surprising that no attempt should have been made to extend to the latter principle of action the same ridicule which has been so lavishly bestowed on the former. So far, however, from this being the case, I believe it will be *universally* granted, that where the latter principle fails in producing its natural and ordinary effect on the conduct, there must exist some defect in the rational or moral character, for which no other good qualities can sufficiently atone. "He that careth not for his own house is worse than an infidel." But if this be acknowledged with respect to the interest we take in the concerns of our connexions after our own disappearance from the present scene, why judge so harshly of the desire of posthumous fame? Do not the two principles often co-operate in stimulating our active exertions to the very same ends? more especially in those cases (alas! too common) where the inheritance of a respectable name is all that a good man has it in his power to bequeath to his family.

planted by nature, or suppose that she has laid a foundation for it in other principles which belong universally to the species.

How very powerfully it operates, appears not only from the heroical sacrifices to which it has led in every age of the world, but from the conduct of the meanest and most worthless of mankind, who, when they are brought to the scaffold in consequence of the clearest and most decisive evidence of their guilt, frequently persevere to the last, with the terrors of futurity full in their view, in the most solemn protestations of their innocence; and *that* merely in the hope of leaving behind them not a fair, but an equivocal or problematical reputation.

With respect to the other parts of Wollaston's reasoning, that it is only the letters which compose our names that we can transmit to posterity, it is worthy of observation, that, if the argument be good for any thing, it applies equally against the desire of esteem from our contemporaries, excepting in those cases in which we ourselves are personally known by those whose praise we covet, and of whose applause we happen ourselves to be ear-witnesses: And yet, undoubtedly, according to the common judgment of mankind, the love of praise is more peculiarly the mark of a liberal and elevated spirit in cases where the gratification it seeks has nothing to recommend it to those whose ruling passions are interest or the love of flattery.[1] It is precisely for the same reason that the love of posthumous fame is strongest in the noblest and most exalted characters. If self-love were really the *sole* motive in all our actions, Wollaston's reasoning would prove clearly the absurdity of any concern about our memory. "Such a concern," as Dr. Hutcheson observes, "no *selfish* being, who had the modelling of his own

[1] That the desire of esteem, if a fantastic principle of action in one of these cases, is equally so in the other, is remarked by Pope; but, instead of availing himself of this consideration to justify the desire of posthumous renown, he employs it as an argument to expose the nothingness of fame in all cases whatsoever.

> What's fame?—a fancied life in other's breath,
> A thing beyond us even before our death.
> All that we feel of it begins and ends
> In the small circle of our foes and friends;
> To all beside as much an empty shade,
> An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead.
>
> *Essay on Man*, Epistle iv. 237

nature, would choose to implant in himself. But, since we have not this power, we must be contented to be thus '*outwitted by nature into a public interest against our will*,'[1] [as an ingenious author expresses it."—*Ed.*]

As to the fact on which Wollaston's argument proceeds, is it not more philosophical to consider it as affording an additional *stimulus* to the instinctive love of posthumous fame, by holding it up to the imagination as the noblest and proudest boast of human ambition, to be able to entail on the casual combination of letters which compose our name, the respect of distant ages, and the blessings of generations yet unborn? Nor is it an unworthy object of the most rational benevolence to render these letters a sort of magical spell for kindling the emulation of the wise and good wherever they shall reach the human ear.

Nor is it only in this instance that nature has "thus outwitted us," for her own wise and salutary purposes. By a mode of reasoning analogous to that of Wollaston, it would be easy to turn most, if not all, our active principles into ridicule. But what should we gain by the attempt, but a ludicrous exposition of that moral constitution which it has pleased our Maker to give us, and which, the more we study it, will be found to abound the more with marks of wise and beneficent design?

It is fortunate, in such cases, that, although the reasonings of the metaphysician may puzzle the understanding, they produce very little effect on the conduct. He may tell us, for example, that the admiration of female beauty is absurd, because *beauty*, as well as *colour*, is a quality not existing in the object, but in the mind of the spectator; or, (which brings the case still nearer to that under our consideration,) he may allege that the whole charm of the finest countenance would vanish if it were examined with the aid of a microscope. In all such cases, as well as in the instance referred to by Wollaston, we are determined very powerfully by nature; in a way, indeed, that our reason cannot explain, but which we never fail

[1] *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, [Sect. I. p. 25, 3d edition.—*Ed.*]

this the only accessory circumstance that enhances the pleasure resulting from the gratification of the original principle. If, in those cases where we are somewhat doubtful of the propriety of our own conduct, we are anxious to have in our favour the sanction of public opinion,—so, on the other hand, when we are satisfied in our own minds that our conduct has been right, *part* of the pleasure we receive from esteem arises from observing the just views and candid dispositions of others. Nor is it less indisputable, on the contrary supposition, that when, in consequence of calumny and misrepresentation, we fail in obtaining that esteem to which we know ourselves to be entitled, our disappointment at missing our just reward is aggravated to a wonderful degree, by our sorrow for the injustice and ingratitude of mankind. Still, however, it must be remembered that these are only *accessory* circumstances, and that there is a pleasure resulting from the possession of esteem which is not resolvable into either of them, and which appears to be an ultimate fact in the constitution of our nature.

From the passage formerly quoted from Wollaston, it appears that he apprehended the love of fame to be justifiable only in *two* cases. The one is, when we desire it as a confirmation of the rectitude of our own judgments; the other, when the possession of it can be attended with some real and solid good. But why, I must again repeat, offer any apology for our obeying a natural principle of our constitution, so long as we preserve it under due regulation?

It is not unworthy of remark, that this principle is one of those with which our fellow-creatures are most disposed to sympathize. With what indignation do we hear the slightest reflection cast on the memory of one who was dear to us, and how sacred do we feel the duty of coming forward in his defence? Nor is this sympathy confined to the circle of our own acquaintance. It embraces the wise and good of the most remote ages, and prompts us irresistibly to protect their fame from the assaults of envy and detraction. Whatever theory philosophers may adopt as to the origin of this sympathy, its utility in preserving immaculate the reputation of those ornaments of

humanity whom mankind look up to as models for imitation, is equally indisputable.

I have already said that the desire of esteem is, on the whole, a useful principle of action; for, although there are many cases in which the public opinion is erroneous and corrupted, there are many more in which it is agreeable to reason, and favourable to the interests of virtue and of mankind. The habits, therefore, which this principle of action has a tendency to form are likely, in most instances, to coincide with those which are recommended by a sense of duty. In many men, accordingly, who are very little influenced by higher principles, a regard to the opinion of the world, (or, as we commonly express it, a regard to character,) produces a conduct honourable to themselves and beneficial to society.[1]

To this observation it may be added, that the habits to which we are trained by the desire of esteem, render the acquisition of virtuous habits more easy. The desire of esteem operates in children before they have a capacity to distinguish right from wrong; or at least the former principle of action is much more powerful *in their case* than the latter. Hence it furnishes a most useful and effectual engine in the business of education, more particularly by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial. It teaches us, for example, to restrain our appetites within those bounds which decency prescribes, and thus forms us to habits of moderation and temperance. And although our conduct cannot be denominated virtuous so long as a regard to the opinion of others is our only motive, yet the habits we thus acquire in infancy and childhood render it more easy for us to subject our passions to the authority of reason and conscience as we advance to maturity. "In that young man," (said Sylla, speaking of Cæsar,) "who walks the streets with so little regard to modesty, I foresee many Mariuses."* His idea probably was, that on a temper so completely divested of

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* [Suetonius, *De* xii. *Cæsaribus*, Lib. I. § 1. Also Plutarch in his *Julius Cæsar*, near the beginning. *Opera*, ed. Xylandri. Tom. i. p. 707.—*Ed.*]

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sympathy with the feelings of others, society could lay little hold, and that whatever principle of action should happen to gain the ascendant in his mind, was likely to sacrifice to its own gratification the restraints both of honour and of duty.

These, and some other considerations of the same kind, have struck Mr. Smith so forcibly, that he has been led to resolve our sense of duty into a regard to the good opinion, and a desire to obtain the *sympathy* of our fellow-creatures.* I shall afterwards have occasion to examine the principal arguments he alleges in support of his conclusions. At present I shall only remark, that, although his theory may account for the desire which all men, both good and bad, have to *assume the appearance of virtue*, it never can explain the origin of our notions of duty and of moral obligation. One striking proof of this is, that the love of fame can only be completely gratified by the *actual* possession of those qualities for which we wish to be esteemed; and that, when we receive praises which we know we do not deserve, we are conscious of a sort of fraud or imposition on the world.

> All fame is foreign but of true desert,
> Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart.

In farther confirmation of the same doctrine it may be observed, that, although the desire of esteem is often an useful auxiliary to our sense of duty, and although, in most of our good actions, the two principles are perhaps more or less blended together, yet the merit of virtuous conduct is always enhanced, in the opinion of mankind, when it is discovered in the more private situations of life, where the individual cannot be suspected of any views to the applauses of the world. Even Cicero, in whose mind vanity had at least its due sway, has borne testimony to this truth. "Mihi quidem laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditatione et sine populo teste fiunt: non quo fugiendus sit (omnia enim benefacta in luce se collocari volunt) sed tamen nullum theatrum virtuti conscientiâ majus est."[1] So far, therefore, are the desire of esteem and

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, especially Part III.]

[1] *Tusc. Disp.* Lib. XI. cap. xxvi. The same remark is made by Pliny in

the sense of duty from being radically the same principle of action, that the former is only an *auxiliary* to the latter, and is always understood to diminish the merit of the agent in proportion to the influence it had over his determinations.

An additional proof of this may be derived from the miserable effects produced on the conduct by the desire of fame, when it is the *sole*, or even the *governing*, principle of our actions. In this case, indeed, it seldom fails to disappoint its own purposes, for a lasting fame is scarcely to be acquired without a steady and consistent conduct, and such a conduct can only arise from a conscientious regard to the suggestions of our own breasts. The pleasure, therefore, which a being capable of reflection derives from the possession of fame, so far from being the original motive to worthy actions, presupposes the existence of other and of nobler motives in the mind.[1]

Nor is this all; when a competition happens between the desire of fame and a regard to duty, if we sacrifice the latter to the former, we are filled with remorse and self-condemnation, and the applauses of the world afford us but an empty and unsatisfactory recompense; whereas a steady adherence to the right, even although it should accidentally expose us to calumny, never fails to be its own reward. Whether, therefore, we regard our lasting happiness, or our lasting fame, the precept of Cicero is equally deserving of our attention.

"Neither make it your study to secure the applauses of the vulgar, nor rest your hopes of happiness on rewards which men

one of his epistles, where it is illustrated by one of the most beautiful anecdotes recorded in the annals of our species. See note B, at the end of this volume.

[1] What the Roman poet has so finely said of the *regulated influence* which the love of literary applause had on his own mind, ought to be the language of every man, into whatever walk of ambition his fortune may have thrown him.

"Non ego, cum scribo, si forte quid aptius exit,
(Quando hæc rara avis est) si quid tamen aptius exit
Laudari metuam; neque enim mihi cornea fibra est;
Sed recti finemque extremumque esse recuso
Euge tuum et Belle."

Persius, *Sat.* i. 45.

I need scarcely remind my readers that these are the words of the same writer, who has in other parts of his works, (and I think in perfect consistency with the sentiment expressed in the foregoing lines,) inculcated the severest precepts of the Stoical school.

. . . . . Non si qùid turbida Roma
Elevet, accedas: examenve improbum in illâ
Castiges trutinâ: Nec te quæsiveris extra
Sat i 5.

can bestow. Let virtue, by her own native attractions, allure you in the paths of honour. What others may say of you is *their* concern, not *yours;* nor is it worth your while to be out of humour for the topics which your conduct may supply to their conversation." "Neque sermonibus vulgi dederis te, nec in præmiis humanis spem posueris rerum tuarum; suis te oportet illecebris *ipsa virtus* trahat ad verum decus. Quid de te alii loquantur ipsi videant, sed loquentur tamen."[1]

SECT. IV.—THE DESIRE OF POWER.

The manner in which the idea of Power is at first introduced into the mind, has been long a perplexing subject of speculation to metaphysicians, and has given rise to some of the most subtile disquisitions of the human understanding. But, although it be difficult to explain its origin, the idea itself is familiar to the most illiterate, even at the earliest period of life; and the desire of possessing the corresponding object seems to be one of the strongest principles of human conduct.

In general, it may be observed, that, wherever we are led to consider ourselves as the authors of any effect, we feel a sensible pride or exultation in the consciousness of *power*, and the pleasure is in general proportioned to the greatness of the effect, compared with the smallness of our exertion.

What is commonly called the pleasure of activity, is in truth the pleasure of *power*. Mere exercise, which produces no sensible effect, is attended with no enjoyment, or a very slight one. The enjoyment, such as it is, is only corporeal.

The infant, while still on the breast, delights in exerting its little strength on every object it meets with, and is mortified when any accident convinces it of its own imbecility. The pastimes of the boy are almost, without exception, such as suggest to him the idea of his *power*. When he throws a stone, or shoots an arrow, he is pleased with being able to produce an effect at a distance from himself; and, while he measures with his eye the amplitude or range of his missile weapon, con-

[1] *Somn. Scip.* Cap. vii.

templates with satisfaction the extent to which his power has reached. It is on a similar principle that he loves to bring his strength into comparison with that of his fellows, and to enjoy the consciousness of superior prowess. Nor need we search in the *malevolent* dispositions of our nature for any other motive to the apparent acts of cruelty which he sometimes exercises over the inferior animals,—the sufferings of the animal, in such cases, either entirely escaping his notice, or being overlooked in that state of pleasurable triumph which the wanton abuse of *power* communicates to a weak and unreflecting judgment. The active sports of the youth captivate his fancy by suggesting similar ideas,—of strength of body, of force of mind, of contempt of hardship and of danger. And accordingly such are the occupations in which Virgil, with a characteristical propriety, employs his young Ascanius.

> " At puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri
> Gaudet equo; jamque hos cursu, jam præterit illos;
> Spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia votis
> Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem."*

As we advance in years, and as our animal powers lose their activity and vigour, we gradually aim at extending our influence over others by the superiority of fortune and station, or by the still more flattering superiority of intellectual endowments, by the force of our understanding, by the extent of our information, by the arts of persuasion, or the accomplishments of address. What but the idea of power pleases the orator in managing the reins of an assembled multitude, when he silences the reason of others by superior ingenuity, bends to his purposes their desires and passions, and, without the aid of force, or the splendour of rank, becomes the arbiter of the fate of nations!

To the same principle we may trace, in part, the pleasure arising from the discovery of general theorems in the sciences. Every such discovery puts us in possession of innumerable particular truths or particular facts, and gives us a ready command of a great stock of knowledge, of which we could not, with

* [*Æneis*, iv. 156.]

equal ease, avail ourselves before. It increases, in a word, our *intellectual power* in a way very analogous to that in which a machine or engine increases the mechanical power of the human body.

The discoveries we make in natural philosophy have, beside this effect, a tendency to enlarge the sphere of our power over the material universe; first, by enabling us to accommodate our conduct to the established course of physical events; and secondly, by enabling us to call to our aid many natural powers or agents as instruments for the accomplishment of our purposes.

In general, every discovery we make with respect to the laws of nature, either in the material or moral worlds, is an accession of power to the human mind, inasmuch as it lays the foundation of prudent and effectual conduct in circumstances where, without the same means of information, the success of our proceedings must have depended on chance alone. The *desire of power*, therefore, comes, in the progress of reason and experience, to act as an auxiliary to our instinctive *desire of knowledge;* and it is with a view to strengthen and confirm this alliance that Bacon so often repeats his favourite maxim, that *knowledge* and *power* are synonymous or identical terms.

The idea of power is, *partly* at least, the foundation of our attachment to *property*. It is not enough for us to have the *use* of an object. We desire to have it completely at our own disposal, without being responsible to any person whatsoever for the purposes to which we may choose to turn it. "There is an unspeakable pleasure," says Addison, "in calling any thing one's own. A freehold, though it be but in ice and snow, will make the owner pleased in the possession, and stout in the defence of it."*

Avarice is a particular modification of the *desire of power*, arising from the various functions of *money* in a commercial country. Its influence as an active principle is greatly strengthened by habit and association, insomuch that the original desire of power is frequently lost in the acquired propensities to which it gives birth; the possession of *money* becoming,

* [*Freeholder, sub initio.*]

in process of time, an ultimate object of pursuit, and continuing to stimulate the activity of the mind after it has lost a relish for every other species of exertion.[1]

The love of liberty proceeds in part, if not wholly, from the same source; from a desire of being able to do whatever is agreeable to our own inclination. Slavery mortifies us, because it limits our power.

Even the love of tranquillity and retirement has been resolved by Cicero into the desire of power. "Multi autem et sunt et fuerunt, qui eam, quam dico, tranquillitatem expetentes, a negotiis publicis se removerint, ad otiumque perfugerint. His idem propositum fuit quod regibus, ut ne quâ re egerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur; cujus proprium est sic vivere ut velis. Quare, cum hoc commune sit potentiæ cupidorum cum iis quos dixi otiosis; alteri se adipisci id posse arbitrantur, si opes magnas habeant, alteri, si contenti sint et suo, et parvo."[2]

The idea of power is also, *in some degree*, the foundation of *the pleasure of virtue*. We love to be at liberty to follow our own inclinations, without being subject to the control of a superior; but even this is not sufficient to our happiness. When we are led by vicious habits, or by the force of passion, to do what reason disapproves, we are sensible of a mortifying subjection to the inferior principles of our nature, and feel our own littleness and weakness. On the other hand, *he that ruleth his spirit* feels himself *greater than he that taketh a city*. "It is pleasant," says Dr. Tillotson, "to be virtuous and good, because *that* is to excel many others. It is pleasant to grow better, because *that* is to excel ourselves. It is pleasant to

[1] Berkeley in his *Querist* has started the same idea.

"Whether the real end and aim of men be not *power*? and whether he who could have every thing else at his wish or will would value *money*?"

To this query the good bishop has subjoined another, which one would hardly have expected from a writer so zealously attached to Tory and High Church principles.

"Whether the public aim in every well-governed state be not, that each member, according to his just pretensions and industry, should have POWER?"—[Queries vii. viii.]

Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret

[2] *De Officiis*, Lib. I. capp. xx. et xxi

mortify and subdue our appetites, because *that* is victory. It is pleasant to command our passions, and keep them within the bounds of reason, because this is empire."

From the observations now made, it appears that the desire of power is subservient to important purposes in our constitution, and is one of the principal sources both of our intellectual and moral improvements. An examination of the effects which it produces on society, would open views very strikingly illustrative of benevolent intention in the Author of our frame. I shall content myself, however, with remarking, that the general aspect of *the fact* affords a very favourable view of human nature. When we consider how much *more* every man has it in his power to *injure* others than to promote their interests, it must appear manifest that society could not possibly subsist unless the benevolent affections had a very decided predominance over those principles which give rise to competition and enmity. Whoever reflects duly on this consideration, will, if I do not deceive myself, be inclined to form conclusions concerning the dispositions of his fellow-creatures very different from the representations of them to be found in the writings of some gloomy and misanthropical moralists.

SECT. V.—EMULATION, OR THE DESIRE OF SUPERIORITY.

This principle of action is classed by Dr. Reid with the affections, and is considered by him as a *malevolent affection*.[1] He tells us, however, that he does not mean by this epithet to insinuate that there is anything *criminal* in emulation, any more than in resentment when excited by an injury; but he thinks that it involves a sentiment of ill-will to our rival, and makes use of the word *malevolent* to express this sentiment, as the language affords no softer epithet to convey the idea.

I own it appears to me that emulation, considered as a prin-

[1] *Essays on the Active Powers*, pp. 166, 167. 4to edit. [Essay III. Part ii. chap. 5.—Mr Stewart quotes Reid's *Essays*, both those *on the Intellectual* and those *on the Moral Powers*, in the original edition in 4to. The pages of this, as the one authentic edition, are given in Reid's *Collected Works*.—*Ed.*]

ciple of action, ought to be classed with the *desires*, and not with the *affections*. It is, indeed, frequently accompanied with a *malevolent* affection ; but it is the desire of *superiority* which is the *active* principle, and the affection is only a concomitant circumstance.

I do not even think that this malevolent affection is a *necessary* concomitant of the desire of superiority. It is possible, surely, to conceive, (although the case may happen but rarely,) that emulation may take place between men who are united by the most cordial friendship, and without a single sentiment of ill-will disturbing their harmony.

When Emulation is accompanied with malevolent affection, it assumes the name of *Envy*. The distinction between these two principles of action is accurately stated by Dr. Butler. "Emulation is merely the desire of superiority over others, with whom we compare ourselves. To desire the attainment of this superiority by the particular means of others being brought down below our own level, is the distinct notion of *Envy*. From whence it is easy to see, that the real end which the natural passion emulation, and which the unlawful one envy, aims at is exactly the same ; and consequently, that to do mischief is not the end of envy, but merely the means it makes use of to attain its end."[1] Dr. Reid himself seems to have clearly perceived the distinction, although in other parts of the same section he has lost sight of it again. "He who runs a race," says he, "feels uneasiness at seeing another outstrip him. This is uncorrupted nature, and the work of God within him. But this uneasiness may produce either of two very different effects. It may incite him to make more vigorous exertions, and to strain every nerve to get before his rival. This is fair and honest emulation. This is the effect it is intended to produce. But if he has not fairness and candour of heart, he will look with an evil eye on his competitor, and will endeavour to trip him, or to throw a stumbling-block in his way. This is pure envy, the most malignant passion that can lodge in the human breast, which devours, as its natural food, the fame

[1] *Sermons.—Upon Human Nature*, [sect. 19, note.]

and the happiness of those who are most deserving of our esteem."[1]

In quoting these passages, I would not be understood to represent this distinction between emulation and envy as a novelty in the science of ethics; for the very same distinction was long ago stated with admirable conciseness and justness by Aristotle; whose *definitions*, (I shall take this opportunity of remarking by the way,) however censurable they may frequently be when they relate to *physical* subjects, are, in most instances, peculiarly happy when they relate to *moral* ideas. "Æmulatio bonum quiddam est, et bonis viris convenit; at invidere improbum est, et hominum improborum; nam æmulans talem efficere se studet, ut ipsa bona quoque nanciscatur; at invidens studet efficere, ut ne alter boni quid habeat."[2]

Among the lower animals we see many symptoms of emulation, but in *them* its effects are perfectly insignificant when compared with those it produces on human conduct. Their emulation is chiefly confined to swiftness,[3] strength, or favour

[1] Reid *On the Active Powers*, p. 170. [Essay III. Part ii. chap. 5; *Works*, p. 567.] Dr. Beattie, in his *Elements of Moral Science*, after stating very correctly the speculative distinction between emulation and envy, observes with great truth, that it is extremely difficult to preserve the former wholly unmixed with the latter; and that emulation, though entirely different from envy, is very apt, through the weakness of our nature, to degenerate into it. To this remark he subjoins the following very striking practical reflection. "Let the man," says he, "who thinks he is actuated by generous emulation only, and wishes to know whether there be anything of envy in the case, examine his own heart, and ask himself whether his friends, on becoming, though in an honourable way, his competitors, have less of his affection than they had before; whether he be gratified by hearing them depreciated; whether he would wish their merit less, that he might the more easily equal or excel them; and whether he would have a more sincere regard for them if the world were to acknowledge him their superior? If his heart answer all or any of these questions in the affirmative, it is time to look out for a cure, for the symptoms of envy are but too apparent."

[2] Ἐστιεικὴς ἐστιν ὁ ζῆλος, καὶ ἐστιεικὸν· τὸ δὲ φθονεῖν φαῦλον, καὶ φαύλων· ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν παρασκευάζει διὰ τὸν ζῆλον τυγχάνειν τῶν ἀγαθῶν· ὁ δὲ τὸν πλησίον μὴ ἔχειν διὰ τὸν φθόνον· &c. &c.—Aristotelis *Rhetorica*, Lib. II. cap. xi. The whole chapter is excellent. I have adopted in the text the Latin version of Buhle. See the Bipontine Edition of Aristotle.

[3] One of the most remarkable instances of this that I have read of is the emulation of the race horses at Rome when run without riders. This emulation is even said to be inspirited by the concourse of spectators.—See *Observations made in a Tour to Italy*, by the celebrated M. de la Condamine.

with their females. I think, too, among *dogs* we may perceive something like jealousy or rivalship in courting the favour of man. In our own race emulation operates in an infinite variety of directions, and is one of the principal sources of human improvement.

Before leaving the subject, I think it of consequence again to repeat, that, notwithstanding the speculative distinction I have been endeavouring to make between emulation and envy, the former disposition is so seldom altogether unmixed with the latter, that men who are conscious of possessing original powers of thinking can scarcely be at too much pains to draw a veil over their claims to originality, if they wish to employ their talents to the best advantage in the service of mankind.

> "Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
> And things unknown propos'd as things forgot."[1]

In the observations which I have hitherto made upon emulation, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the subject of competition is the personal qualities of the individual. These, however, are not the great objects of ambition with the bulk of mankind, nor perhaps do they occasion jealousies and enmities so fatal to our morals and our happiness, as those which are occasioned by the seemingly partial and unjust distribution of the goods of fortune. To see the natural rewards of industry and genius fall to the share of the weak and the profligate, can scarcely fail to excite a regret in the best regulated tempers; and to those who are disposed (as every man perhaps is in some degree) to over-rate their own pretensions, and to undervalue those of their neighbours, this regret is a source of discontent and misery which no measure of external prosperity is sufficient to remove. The feeling, when it does not lead to any act of injustice or dishonour, is so intimately connected with our sense of merit and demerit, that many allowances for it will be made by those who reflect candidly on the common infirmities of humanity; and much indulgence is due from the prosperous to their less fortunate rivals. So much indeed is this indulgence recommended to us by all the best principles of our

[1] Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, [574.]

nature, and so painful is the reflection that we are even the innocent cause of disquiet to others, that it may be doubted whether the constraint and embarrassment produced by great and sudden accessions of prosperity be not more than sufficient to counterbalance any solid addition they are likely to bring to our own happiness.[1]

Human life has been often likened to a race, and the parallel holds, not only in the general resemblance, but in many of the minuter circumstances. When the horses first start from the barrier how airy and sportive are their sallies,—sometimes one taking the lead, sometimes another! If they happen to run abreast, their contiguity seems only the effect of the social instinct. In proportion, however, as they advance in their career, the spirit of emulation becomes gradually more apparent, till at length, as they draw near to the goal, every sinew and every nerve is strained to the utmost, and it is well if the competition closes without some suspicion of jostling and foul play on the part of the winner.

How exact and melancholy a picture of the race of ambition, of the insensible and almost inevitable effect of political rivalship in extinguishing early friendships; and of the increasing eagerness with which men continue to grasp at the palm of victory, till the fatal moment arrives when it is no drop from their hands for ever!

As we have artificial *appetites*, so we have also artificial *desires*. Whatever conduces to the attainment of any object of natural desire, is itself desired on account of its subservience to

[1] See an admirable passage in Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* [Part I. section iii. chap. 3] [Vol. I. p. 96, *et seq.* sixth edition.] "The man who by some sudden revolution of fortune is lifted up all at once into a condition of life greatly above what he had formerly lived in, may be assured that the congratulations of his best friends are not all of them perfectly sincere," &c. &c.

In Bacon's *Essays* there is an article *On Envy*, abounding with original and, in the main, just reflections. Even those which are somewhat questionable may be useful in suggesting materials of thought to others.

fame, both of which I have endeavoured to show, in the preceding pages, are justly entitled to rank with the primary and most simple elements of our active constitution. That they, as well as all the other original principles of our nature, are very powerfully influenced by association and habit, is a point about which there can be no dispute; and hence arises the plausibility of those theories which would represent them as wholly factitious.[1]

[1] Dr. Hartley's once celebrated work entitled *Observations on Man*, in which he has pushed the theory of association to so extravagant a length, and which, not many years ago, found so many enthusiastic admirers in England, seems to have owed its existence to the Dissertation here referred to.

"The work here offered to the public," he tells us himself in his preface, "consists of papers written at different times, but taking their rise from the following occasion.

"About eighteen years ago I was informed, that the Rev. Mr. Gay, then living, asserted the possibility of deducing all our intellectual pleasures and pains from association. This put me upon considering the power of association. Mr. Gay published his sentiments on this matter, about the same time, in a *Dissertation on the Fundamental Principle of Virtue*, prefixed to Mr. Archdeacon Law's *Translation of Archbishop King's Origin of Evil*."

CHAPTER III.

OF OUR AFFECTIONS.

SECTION I.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

Under this title are comprehended all those active principles whose direct and ultimate object is the communication either of enjoyment or of suffering to any of our fellow-creatures. According to this definition, which has been adopted by some eminent writers, and among others by Dr. Reid,* resentment, revenge, hatred, belong to the class of our affections as well as gratitude or pity. Hence a distinction of the affections into benevolent and malevolent. I shall afterwards mention some considerations which lead me to think that the distinction requires some limitations in the statement.

Our benevolent affections are various, and it would not perhaps be easy to enumerate them completely. The parental and the filial affections—the affections of kindred—love—friendship—patriotism—universal benevolence—gratitude—pity to the distressed, are some of the most important. Besides these there are peculiar benevolent affections excited by those moral qualities in other men, which render them either amiable or respectable, or objects of admiration.

In the foregoing enumeration, it is not to be understood that all the benevolent affections particularly specified are stated as original principles, or ultimate facts in our constitution. On the contrary, there can be little doubt that several of them may be analyzed into the same general principle differently modified, according to the circumstances in which it operates.

* [*Active Powers;* Essay III. Part ii. chaps. 3, 5.]

This, however, (notwithstanding the stress which has been sometimes laid upon it,) is chiefly a question of arrangement. Whether we suppose these principles to be all ultimate facts, or some of them to be resolvable into other facts more general, they are equally to be regarded as constituent parts of human nature, and, upon either supposition, we have equal reason to admire the wisdom with which that nature is adapted to the situation in which it is placed. The laws which regulate the acquired perceptions of sight are surely as much a part of our frame as those which regulate any of our original perceptions; and although they require for their development a certain degree of experience and observation in the individual, the uniformity of the result shows that there is nothing arbitrary or accidental in their origin.

The question, indeed, concerning the origin of our different affections, leads to some curious disquisitions, but is of very subordinate importance to those inquiries which relate to their nature and laws and uses. In many philosophical systems, however, it seems to have been considered as the most interesting subject of discussion connected with this part of the human constitution.

Before we proceed to consider any of our benevolent affections in detail, I shall make a few observations on two circumstances in which they all agree. In the *first place*, they are all accompanied with an agreeable feeling; and, *secondly*, they imply a desire of happiness or of good to their respective objects.[1]

I. That the exercise of all our kind affections is accompanied with an agreeable feeling will not be questioned. Next to a good conscience it constitutes the principal part of human happiness. With what satisfaction do we submit to fatigue and danger in the service of those we love, and how many cares do even the most selfish voluntarily bring on themselves by their attachment to others! So much indeed of our happiness is derived from this source, that those authors whose object is

[1] See Reid on the *Active Powers*, p. 144, 4to edit. [*Essay* III. Part ii. chap. 3.]

to furnish *amusement* to the mind, avail themselves of these affections as one of the chief vehicles of pleasure. Hence the principal charm of *tragedy*, and of every other species of pathetic composition. How far it is of use to separate in this manner "the *luxury of pity*" from the opportunities of active exertion, may perhaps be doubted. *My own* opinion on this question I have stated at some length in the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*.[1]

Without entering, however, in this place into the argument I have there endeavoured to support, I shall only remark at present, that the pleasures of kind affection are by no means confined (as men of loose principles are too apt to flatter themselves) to the virtuous part of our species. They mingle also with our criminal indulgences, and often mislead the young and thoughtless by the charms they impart to vice and folly. It is indeed from this very quarter that the chief dangers to morals are to be apprehended in early life; and it is a melancholy consideration to add, that these dangers are not a little increased by the amiable and attractive qualities by which nature often distinguishes those unfortunate men who would seem, on a superficial view, to be her peculiar favourites.

Nor is it only when the kind affections meet with circumstances favourable to their operation that the exercise of them is a source of enjoyment. Contrary to the analogy of most, if not of all, our other active principles, there is a degree of pleasure mixed with the pain even in those cases in which they are disappointed in the attainment of their object. Nay, in such cases it often happens that the pleasure predominates so far over the pain as to produce a mixed emotion, on which a wounded heart loves to dwell. When death, for example, has deprived us of the society of a friend, we derive some consolation for our loss from the recollection of his virtues, which awakens in our mind all those kind affections which the sight of him used to inspire; and in such a situation the indulgence of these affections is preferred not only to every lighter amusement, but to every other social pleasure. *Heu quanto minus*

[1] Vol. I. chap. vii. sect. 5, p. 457, *seq*

*est cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse!** The final cause of the agreeable emotion connected with the exercise of benevolence in all its various modes, was evidently to induce us to cultivate with peculiar care a class of our active principles so immediately subservient to the happiness of society.[1]

II. All our benevolent affections imply a desire of happiness to their respective objects. Indeed it is from this circumstance they derive their name.

The philosophers who have endeavoured to resolve our appetites and desires into self-love have given a similar account of our benevolent affections. It is evident that this amounts to a denial of their existence as a separate class of active principles: for when a thing is desired not on its own account, but as instrumental to the attainment of something else, it is not the desire of the *means*, but that of the *end*, which is in this case the principle of action.

In the course of my observations on the different affections, when I come to consider them particularly, I shall endeavour to show that this account of their origin is extremely wide of the truth. In the meantime it may be worth while to remark in general, how strongly it is opposed by the analogy of the other active powers already examined. We have found that the preservation of the individual and the continuation of the species are not entrusted to self-love and reason alone, but that we are endowed with various appetites which, without any reflection on our part, impel us to their respective objects. We have also found, with respect to the acquisition of knowledge, (on which the perfection of the individual and the improvement of the species essentially depend,) that it is not entrusted solely to self-love and benevolence, but that we are prompted

* [Shenstone.]

[1] See Lucan's picturesque and pathetic description of the behaviour of Cornelia when she retired to the hold of the ship to indulge her grief in solitude and darkness after the murder of Pompey.

. . . . . '" Caput ferali obduxit amictu,
Decrevitque pati tenebras, puppisque cavernis
Delituit; *secumque arctè complexa dolorem*
Perfruitur lacrymis, et amat pro conjuge luctum," &c. &c.
Pharsalia, Lib. ix. 199

to it by the implanted principle of curiosity. It farther appeared, that, in addition to our sense of duty, another incentive to worthy conduct is provided in the desire of esteem, which is not only one of our most powerful principles of action, but continues to operate in full force to the last moment of our being. Now, as men were plainly intended to live in society, and as the social union could not subsist without a mutual interchange of good offices, would it not be reasonable to expect, agreeably to the analogy of our nature, that so important an end would not be entrusted solely to the slow deductions of reason, or to the metaphysical refinements of self-love, but that some provision would be made for it, in a particular class of active principles, which might operate, like our appetites and desires, independently of our reflection? To say this of parental affection or of pity, is saying nothing more in their favour than what was affirmed of hunger and thirst, that they prompt us to particular objects without any reference to our own enjoyment.

I have not offered these objections to the selfish theory with any view of exalting our natural affections into *virtues;* for, in so far as they arise from original constitution, they confer no merit whatever on the individual any more than his appetites or desires:—at the same time, (as Dr. Reid has observed,) there is a manifest gradation in the sentiments of respect with which we regard these different constituents of character.

Our *desires*, (it was formerly observed,) although not virtuous in themselves, are manly and respectable, and plainly of greater dignity than our animal appetites. In like manner it may be remarked that our benevolent affections, although not *meritorious*, are highly *amiable*. A want of attention to the essential difference between the ideas expressed by these two words has given rise to much confusion in different systems of Moral Philosophy, more particularly in the systems of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

As it would lead me into too minute a detail to consider our different benevolent affections separately, I shall confine myself to a few detached remarks on some of the most important.

The *first* place is undoubtedly due to what we commonly call *natural affection*, including under the term the affections of parents and children, and those of other near relations.

SECT. II.—OF THE AFFECTIONS OF KINDRED.

The parental affection is common to us with most of the brutes, although with them it is variously modified according to their respective natures, and according as the care of the parent is more or less necessary for the preservation and nurture of the young. Cicero remarks that this is no more than might have been expected from that beneficent Providence everywhere conspicuous in nature. "Hæc inter se congruere non possunt, ut natura et procreari vellet et diligi procreatos non curaret."[1]—"Commune animantium omnium est conjunctionis appetitus, et cura quædam eorum quæ procreata sunt."[2]

When I ascribe parental affection to our own species, I do not mean to insinuate that there is any foundation for those stories which poets have feigned of particular discriminating feelings which have enabled parents and children, after a long absence, or when they have never met before, mutually to recognise each other. The parental affection takes its rise from a *knowledge* of the relation in which the parties stand, and it is very powerfully confirmed by *habit*. All that I assert is, that it results naturally from that knowledge, and from the habits superinduced by the relation which the parties bear to each other; in which sense it may be justly said, (to adopt a beautiful and philosophical expression of Dr. Ferguson's,) that "natural affection springs up in the soul as the milk springs in the breast of the mother."[3] Accordingly, it operates, in a great measure, independently of reflection and of a sense of duty. Reason, indeed, might satisfy a man that his children are particularly entrusted to his care, and that it is his duty to rear and educate them; as reason might have induced him to

[1] *De Finibus*, [Lib. III. cap. xix.]

[2] *De Officiis*, [Lib. I. cap. iv.]

[3] *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, Vol. I. p. 31. [Part I. chap. i. sect 3.]

eat and drink without the appetites of hunger and thirst; but reason cannot create an affection any more than an appetite: And, considering how little the conduct of mankind is in general influenced by a sense of duty, there are good grounds for thinking, that, were not reason in this case aided by a very powerful implanted principle, a very small proportion out of the whole number of children brought into the world would arrive at maturity.

How much this affection depends upon *habit* appears from this, that, when the care of a child is devolved upon one who is not its parent, the parental affection is, in a great measure, transferred along with it. "This," as Dr. Reid observes, "is plainly the work of nature, and is an additional provision made by her for the continuation and preservation of the species."

The parental affection, as we have hitherto considered it, is common to both sexes; but it cannot, I think, be denied, that it is in the heart of *the mother* that it exists in the most perfect strength and beauty. Indeed I do not think that those have gone too far who have pronounced "*the heart of a good mother to be the masterpiece of nature's works.*"[1] There is no form, certainly, in which humanity appears so lovely, or presents so fair a copy of the Divine image after which it was made.

Nor are these affections of parent and child useful solely for the preservation of the race. They form the heart in infancy for its more extensive social duties, and gradually prepare it for those affections which constitute the character of the good citizen; not to mention that, in every period of life, it is our private attachments which furnish the most powerful of all incentives to patriotism and heroic virtue. Nothing, therefore, could be more unphilosophical than the opinion of Plato, that the indulgence of the domestic charities unfitted men for the discharge of their political duties; an opinion which he carried so far as to propose, that, as soon as a child was born, it should be separated from its parents, and educated ever after at the expense of the public. It has been often observed that persons brought up in foundling hospitals have seldom turned well out

[1] See Marmontel, *Leçons sur la Morale*, p. 132, *et seq.*

in the world; and although I doubt not that various splendid exceptions to this proposition may be quoted, I am inclined to think, that, if the special accidents connected with these exceptions were fully known, they would be found, instead of invalidating, to confirm the general rule. One thing, at least, is obvious, that, in that best of all educations which nature has provided for us in the ordinary circumstances of our condition, it formed an important part of her plan to soften the heart betimes amid the scenes of domestic life; and, accordingly, it is under the shelter of these scenes that all the social virtues may be seen to shoot up with the greatest vigour and luxuriancy. Even the sterner qualities of fortitude and bravery, so far from being inconsistent with a warm and susceptible heart, are almost its inseparable attendants, insomuch that we always *expect* to find them united. How true, in this respect, to all the best feelings of our nature, is the beautiful story recorded of Epaminondas, that, after the battle of Leuctra, he thanked the gods that his parents still survived to enjoy his fame!

It is remarked by Dr. Beattie* that Homer and Virgil, the most accurate of all observers, and the most faithful of all painters of human character, always unite the domestic attachments with the more splendid virtues of their heroes. The scene between Hector and Andromache, and the interview between Ulysses and his father after an absence of twenty years, are pronounced by the same excellent critic to be the finest passages in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He observes farther, that, in the portrait of Achilles, his love to his parents forms one of the most prominent and distinguishing features, and that "this single circumstance throws an amiable softness into the most terrific human personage that was ever described in poetry." How powerful a charm the *Æneid* derives from the same source it is needless to mention, as it is the chief ground-work of the interest inspired by the whole texture of the fable. In no instance is it more affecting than in the address of Euryalus to Nisus before they set out on their desperate expedition by night; and, I believe, few will deny that the pious concern

* [*Dissertations Moral and Critical.*—(*On the Attachments of Kindred,*) p. 599, *seq.*]

which he expresses for his aged parent in that moment of approaching peril accords perfectly with the gallantry of his spirit, and interests us more than any thing else in his fortunes.

> . . . . . "Contra quem talia fatur
> Euryalus: me nulla dies tam fortibus ausis
> Dissimilem arguerit; tantùm fortuna secunda,
> Haud adversa cadat: sed te super omnia dona,
> Unum oro: Genetrix Priami de gente vetustâ
> Est mihi, quam miseram tenuit non Ilia tellus,
> Mecum excedentem, non mœnia regis Acestæ:
> Hanc ego nunc ignaram hujus quodcunque pericli est
> Inque salutatam linquo: nox, et tua testis
> Dextera, quòd nequeam lacrymas perferre parentis.
> At tu, oro, solare inopem, et succurre relictæ.
> Hanc sine me spem ferre tui; Audentior ibo
> In casus omnes. Percussa mente dederunt
> Dardanidæ lacrymas: ante omnes pulcher Iulus,
> Atque animum patriæ strinxit pietatis imago."*

I shall conclude this section in the words of Lord Bacon:—"Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants, but not always best subjects, for they are light to run away, and almost all fugitives are of that condition. For soldiers, I find that the generals in their hortatives commonly put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage among the Turks maketh the vulgar soldiers the more base. Certainly, wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust; yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hard-hearted, because their tenderness is not so often called upon."†

SECT. III.—OF FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship, like all the other benevolent affections, includes two things, an agreeable feeling, and a desire of happiness to its object.

Besides, however, the agreeable feelings common to all the exertions of benevolence, there are some peculiar to friendship.

* [*Æneis*, ix. 280.] † [*Essay*, viii.]

I before took notice of the pleasure we derive from communicating our thoughts and our feelings to others; but this communication prudence and propriety restrain us from making to strangers; and hence the satisfaction we enjoy in the society of one to whom we can communicate every circumstance in our situation, and can trust every secret of our heart.

There is also a wonderful pleasure arising from the sympathy of our fellow-creatures with our joys and with our sorrows, nay, even with our tastes and our humours; but, in the ordinary commerce of the world, we are often disappointed in our expectations of this enjoyment; a disappointment which is peculiarly incident to men of genius and sensibility superior to the common, who frequently feel themselves "alone in the midst of a crowd," and reduced to the necessity of accommodating their own temper, and their own feelings, to a standard borrowed from those whom they cannot help thinking undeserving of such a sacrifice.

It is only in the society of a friend that this sympathy is at all times to be found; and the pleasing reflection that we have it in our power to command so exquisite a gratification, constitutes, perhaps, the principal charm of this connexion. "What we call affection," says Mr. Smith, "is nothing but an habitual sympathy."* I will not go quite so far as to adopt this proposition in all its latitude, but I perfectly agree with this profound and amiable moralist in thinking, that the experience of this sympathy is the chief foundation of friendship, and one of the principal sources of the pleasures which it yields. Nor is it at all inconsistent with this observation to remark, that, where the ground-work of two characters in point of moral worth is the same, there is sometimes a contrast in the secondary qualities, of taste, of intellectual accomplishments, and even of animal spirits, which, instead of presenting obstacles to friendship, has a tendency to bind more strongly the knot of mutual attachment between the parties. Two very interesting and memorable examples of this may be found in Cuvier's account of the friendship between Buffon and Daubenton, and

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part I. sect. i. chap. 1.]

in Playfair's account of the friendship between Black and Hutton.

I do not mean here to enter into the consideration of the various topics relating to friendship which are commonly discussed by writers on that subject. *Most* of these, indeed I may say *all* of them, are beautifully illustrated by Cicero in the treatise *De Amicitia*, in which he has presented us with a summary of all that was most valuable on this article of ethics in the writings of preceding philosophers; and so comprehensive is the view of it which he has taken, that the modern authors who have treated of it have done little more than to repeat his observations.

One question concerning friendship much agitated in the ancient schools was, "whether this connexion can subsist in its full perfection between more than two persons?"—and I believe it was the common decision of antiquity that it *cannot*. For my own part, I can see no foundation for this limitation, and I own it seems to me to have been suggested more by the dreams of romance, or the fables of ancient mythology, than by good sense or an accurate knowledge of mankind. The passion of love between the sexes is, indeed, of an exclusive nature; and the jealousy of the one party is roused the moment a suspicion arises that the attachment of the other is in any degree divided; (and by the way this circumstance, which I think is strongly characteristical of that connexion, deserves to be added to the various other considerations which show that monogamy has a foundation in human nature.) But the feelings of friendship are perfectly of a different sort. If our friend is a man of discernment, we rejoice at every new acquisition he makes, as it affords us an opportunity of adding to our own list of worthy and amiable individuals, and we eagerly concur with him in promoting the interests of those who are dear to his heart. When we ourselves, on the other hand, have made a new discovery of worth and genius, how do we long to impart the same satisfaction to a friend, and to be instrumental in bringing together the various respectable and worthy men whom the accidents of life have thrown in our way!

I acknowledge, at the same time, that the number of our attached and confidential friends cannot be great, otherwise our attention would be too much distracted by the multiplicity of its objects, and the views for which this affection of the mind was probably implanted, would be frustrated by its engaging us in exertions beyond the extent of our limited abilities; and, accordingly, nature has made a provision for preventing this inconvenience, by rendering friendship the fruit only of long and intimate acquaintance. It is strengthened not only by the acquaintance which the parties have with each other's personal qualities, but with their histories, situations, and connexions from infancy, and every particular of this sort which falls under their mutual knowledge, forms to the fancy an additional relation by which they are united. Men who have a very wide circle of friends, without much discrimination or preference, are justly suspected of being incapable of genuine friendship, and, indeed, are generally men of cold and selfish characters, who are influenced chiefly by a cool and systematical regard to their own comfort, and who value the social intercourse of life only as it is subservient to their accommodation and amusement.

That the affection of friendship includes a desire of happiness to the beloved object, it is unnecessary to observe. There is, however, a certain limitation of the remark which occurs among the Maxims of La Rochefoucauld, and which has been often repeated since by misanthropical moralists, "That, in the distresses of our best friends, there is always something which does not displease us." It may be proper to consider in what sense this is to be understood, and how far it has a foundation in truth. It is expressed in somewhat equivocal terms; and, I suspect, owes much of its plausibility to this very circumstance.

From the triumphant air with which the maxim in question has been generally quoted by the calumniators of human nature, it has evidently been supposed by them to imply, that the misfortunes of our best friends give us more pleasure than pain.[1]

[1] It was plainly in this sense that Swift understood it, when he prefixed it as a motto to the verses on his own death.

"As Rochefoucauld his maxims drew
From nature, I believe them true.
If what he says be not a joke,
We mortals are strange kind of folk."

But this La Rochefoucauld has not said, nor indeed could a proposition so obviously false and extravagant have escaped the pen of so acute a writer. What La Rochefoucauld has said amounts only to this, that, in the distresses of our best friends, the pain we feel is not altogether unmixed ;—a proposition unquestionably true, wherever we have an opportunity of soothing their sorrows by the consolations of sympathy, or of evincing, by more substantial services, the sincerity and strength of our attachment. But the pleasure we experience in such cases, so far from indicating anything selfish or malevolent in the heart, originates in principles of a directly opposite description, and will be always most pure and exquisite in the most disinterested and generous characters. The maxim, indeed, when thus interpreted, is not less true when applied to our own distresses than to those of our friends. In the bitterest cup that may fall to the lot of either, there are always mingled some cordial drops ;—in the misfortunes of others, the consolation of *administering* relief—in our own, that of *receiving* it from the sympathy of those we love.

Whether La Rochefoucauld, in the satirical humour which dictated the greater part of his maxims, did not wish, in the present instance, to convey by his words a little more than *meets the ear*, I do not presume to determine.

SECT. IV.—OF PATRIOTISM.

Notwithstanding the principles of union implanted by nature in the human breast, it was plainly *not* her intention that society should always go on increasing in numbers. A foundation is laid for a division of mankind into distinct communities, in those natural divisions on the surface of the globe that are formed by chains of mountains, impassable rivers, and the oceans which separate the larger continents ; and the same end is farther answered by those principles of enmity which, in the earlier stages of society, never fail to estrange neighbouring tribes from each other, and which continue to operate with a

very powerful effect even in periods of knowledge and refinement.

I shall not at present attempt to analyze particularly the origin of these principles of disunion among mankind. I shall only remark, that they do not imply any original malignity in the human heart; on the contrary, they seem to have their source in the social nature of man,—in those affections which attach him to the tribe he belongs to, and to the country which gave him birth. This remark has been so excellently illustrated by Lord Shaftesbury and by Dr. Ferguson, that it would be quite superfluous to enlarge upon it here. Contenting myself, therefore, with a reference to their works,[1] I shall proceed to some other views of the subject, where the field of observation does not seem to be so completely exhausted.

The foundation which nature has laid for a diversity of languages, of customs, of manners, and of institutions among mankind, adds force to the principles of division and repulsion already mentioned. These circumstances derive their effect, indeed, from the *ignorance* of men, which is apt to mistake a diversity of arbitrary signs and arbitrary ceremonies, for a diversity of opinions and of moral sentiments; and, accordingly, as society advances, and reason improves, the effect becomes gradually less and less sensible. As the effect, however, is universal among rude nations, and as it is the unavoidable result of the general laws of our consititution when placed in certain circumstances, we may consider it as a part of the plan of Providence with respect to our species; and we may presume that here, as in other instances, that plan tends ultimately to some wise and beneficent purpose, though by means which appear to us, at first view, to have a very unfavourable aspect. What these purposes are it is impossible for our limited faculties to trace completely; but even *we*, narrow and partial as our views at present are, may perceive *some* salutary consequences resulting from these apparent disorders of the

[1] See Shaftesbury's [*Characteristics*, Vol. I.—ii. *Sensus Communis, or an*] *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, Part III. sect. ii.; and Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Part I. sect. iv.

moral world. I shall only mention the tendency which a constant state of hostility and alarm must have among barbarous tribes to bind and consolidate in each of them apart the political union; and by strengthening the hands of government to prepare the way for the progress of society. We may add, the exercise which it gives to many of our most important moral principles, and the powerful stimulus it applies to our intellectual capacities. The discipline is indeed rough, but it is perhaps the only one of which the mind of man, in a certain state of his progress, is susceptible.

If these observations are well-founded, may we not presume to offer a conjecture, that, as this final cause ceases to exist, in proportion as government advances to maturity, and as the moral causes of hostility among nations (arising from diversity of language and of manners) cease to operate upon men of enlightened and liberal minds, that the tendency of civilized society is to diminish the dissensions among different communities, and to unite the human race in the bonds of amity. The just views of political economy which Mr. Smith and some other authors have lately opened, and which demonstrate the absurdity of commercial jealousies, all contribute to encourage the same pleasing prospects; but alas! it is a prospect which the vices and prejudices of men allow us to indulge only in those moments of enthusiasm when our benevolent wishes for mankind, and our confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Providence, transport us from the calamities and atrocities of our own times, to anticipate the triumphs of reason and humanity in a more fortunate age.

In the *Philosophy of the Human Mind* I have remarked, that "there are many prejudices which are found to prevail universally among our species in certain periods of society, and which seem to be essentially necessary for maintaining its order in ages when men are unable to comprehend the purposes for which governments are instituted. As society advances these prejudices gradually lose their influence on the higher classes, and would probably soon disappear altogether, if it were not supposed to be expedient to prolong their existence as a source

of authority over the multitude. In an age, however, of universal and unrestrained discussion, it is impossible that they can long maintain their empire; nor ought we to regret their decline, if the important ends to which they have been subservient in the past experience of mankind are found to be accomplished by the growing light of philosophy. On this supposition a history of human prejudices, in so far as they have supplied the place of more enlarged political views, may, at some future period, furnish to the philosopher a subject of speculation no less pleasing and instructive than that beneficent wisdom of nature which guides the operations of the lower animals, and which, even in our own species, takes upon itself the care of the individual in the infancy of human reason."[1]

The remarks which have been now made on the sources of disunion and hostility among mankind in the earlier periods of society, and on the final causes to which this constitution of things is subservient, afford one remarkable illustration of the conjecture which I have hazarded in the foregoing passage.

Before proceeding to consider the affection of patriotism, it was necessary to turn our attention for a moment to the principles of disunion in our species, as the idea of patriotism proceeds on the supposition, that mankind are divided into distinct communities, with separate, if not with rival and hostile interests.

The exciting causes of patriotism (abstracting from all considerations of reason and duty) are many. We are formed with so strong a disposition to associate with, and to love our own species, that the imagination lays hold with eagerness of every circumstance, how slight soever, that can form a bond of union; a common language, a common religion, common laws, even a common appellation,—not to mention the prudential considerations of common enemies and a common interest. The feelings which these uniting circumstances inspire attach us even to the *territory* which our fellow-citizens inhabit, by the same law of *association* that endears to us the spot where a friend was born, or the scene where we have enjoyed any social

[1] Vol. I. [ch. iv. § 8; above, *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 248, 249.]

pleasure; and thus the imagination forms to itself a complex idea of countrymen and country, which impresses every susceptible heart with irresistible force. In perusing the history of either, how remote soever the period it describes may be, we feel an interest which no other narrative inspires. We sympathize with the fortunes of those who trode the same ground that we now tread, and we appropriate to ourselves a share of the glory they acquired by their bravery and virtue. "When the late Mr. Anson (Lord Anson's brother) was on his travels in the East, he hired a vessel to visit the Isle of Tenedos. His pilot, an old Greek, as they were sailing along, said with some satisfaction, 'Twas there our fleet lay.' Mr. Anson demanded *what fleet?—What fleet!* (replied the old man, a little piqued at the question,) why, our Grecian fleet at the Siege of Troy." This anecdote (which I borrow from the *Philological Inquiries* of Mr. Harris)[1] naturally excites a smile; but it is, at the same time, so congenial to feelings inseparable from our constitution, that its effect seems to me to border on the pathetic, and I presume there are few who have read it without some emotion.

It is not a little remarkable, with respect to this natural attachment to the scenes of our infancy and youth, that it is commonly strongest among the inhabitants of barren and mountainous countries. This would appear to indicate that it is produced less by the recollection of agreeable physical impressions than of *moral* pleasures,—pleasures which probably derive an additional zest from the absence of those interesting or amusing objects which dissipate the attention by inviting the thoughts abroad. Where nature has been sparing in her external bounty, men become the more dependent for their happiness on internal enjoyment, and it is thus that the storms and gloom of winter give a higher relish to the pleasures of society. Perhaps, too, the thin and scattered population of such countries may contribute something to the romantic enthusiasm of the domestic and private attachments, as it is certain that the opposite extreme of a crowded and busy popu-

[1] Harris' *Works*, edited by his son the Earl of Malmesbury, Vol. II. p 462, [4to edition; *Philological Inquiries*, Part III. chap. v.]

lation seldom fails to extinguish all the more ardent social affections. Among the inhabitants of Europe this attachment to home is said to be the most remarkable in the Swiss and the Laplanders, who, when removed to a distance from their native scenes, are subject to a particular species of despondency, to which medical writers have given the name of *Nostalgia*. It is thus described by Haller, who was himself a native of Switzerland, and who, in some of his poetical pieces, composed during the period of his academical studies in Holland, has sufficiently shown that his own heart was not proof against its influence.

"*Nostalgia* genus est mœroris, subditis reipublicæ meæ familiaris, etiam civibus, a desiderio nati suorum. Is sensim consumit ægros et destruit, nonnunquam in rigorem et maniam abit, alias in febres lentas. Eum spes sanat. Etiam animalia consuetâ societate privata, nonnunquam depereunt, et ex pullis amissis etiam lutræ maris Kamtchadalensis. Sic ex amore frustrato lenta et insanabilis consumptio sequitur, quod Angli *cor ruptum* [*broken heart*] vocant."[1]

We are informed by another medical writer, (Sauvages,) that he has known this disorder in the son of a common beggar, who could scarcely be said to have any home but the streets and public roads.[2]

> "Thus every good his native wilds impart
> Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
> And even the ills that round his mansion rise
> Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
> Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
> And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms.
> And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
> Clings close and closer to its mother's breast,
> So the loud tempest and the whirlwind's roar
> But bind him to his native mountains more." *

The sources of patriotism hitherto mentioned arise chiefly from the *imagination* and from the *association of ideas*, and have little or no connexion with our rational and moral powers.

[1] *Elementa Physiologiæ*, Lib. XVII. sect ii. § 5.

[2] *Nosologia Methodica.*

* [Goldsmith's *Traveller*, l. 199.]

They presuppose, indeed, sensibility, social attachment, and force of mind, but they do not necessarily imply reflection or a sense of duty. They are the natural result of our constitution when placed in certain circumstances; and hence, though not coeval with our birth, nor after their appearance unsusceptible of analysis, the affection they produce, in so far as it arises from *them* without the co-operation of any other motive, may be considered as a *blind impulse*, analogous in its operation to those desires and appetites which have been already mentioned. This affection may be called, for the sake of distinction, Instinctive Patriotism.

The circumstances which have been enumerated as the sources of instinctive patriotism operate with peculiar force in small communities, where the extent of the territory and the body of the people falling under the habitual observation of every citizen, present more definite objects to the imagination, and affect the heart more deeply than what is only conceived from description. *Here*, too, the individual feels his importance as an active member of the state, and the consciousness of what he is able to do for its prosperity contributes powerfully to promote his patriotic exertions.

In an extensive and populous country the instinctive affection of patriotism is apt to grow languid among the mass of the people, and therefore it becomes the more necessary to impress on their minds those considerations of reason and duty which recommend public spirit as one of the principal branches of morality. What these considerations are I shall afterwards endeavour to point out in treating of the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. At present I shall only remark, that, as instinctive patriotism decays, so rational patriotism acquires force in proportion to the extent of territory and to the multitude of fellow-citizens it embraces; in other words, in proportion to the magnitude of that sum of happiness which it aspires to secure and to augment.

Such considerations, however, can have weight only with men whose sense of duty is strong; and as, unfortunately, this is not the case with a great proportion of mankind, it is of the

utmost consequence, in every state of society, to cherish as much as possible the instinctive affection of patriotism, and to counteract those causes that tend to extinguish it. For this purpose nothing is more likely to be effectual than to diffuse a general taste for historical and geographical reading. A peasant who has never extended his thoughts beyond his own province, and who sees everything flourishing and happy around him, is apt to consider the enjoyments he possesses as inseparable from the human race, and no more connected with any particular system of laws than the advantages he derives from the immediate bounty of nature. It is the study of history and geography alone that can remove this prejudice, by showing us, on the one hand, the narrow limits within which the political happiness of our species has hitherto been confined; and, on the other, the singular combination of accidental circumstances to which we are indebted for the blessings we enjoy. This effect of history indeed tends rather to cherish *rational* than *instinctive* patriotism; but it operates also wonderfully on the latter affection, by leading us to contrast our own country and countrymen with other lands and other nations, and thereby presenting a more definite and interesting object to the imagination and to the heart. When, from the transactions of past ages and of foreign lands, we return to what is near and familiar, we are affected somewhat in the same manner as if we met with a fellow-citizen in a distant country. Absence from home never fails to endear it to a mind possessed of any sensibility. The extent of our country, too, seems to diminish to our intellectual eye in proportion as the object recedes from us, and we feel a sensible relation to what we before regarded with complete indifference. The natives of the same county in Scotland feel towards each other a partial predilection when they meet in the metropolis of Great Britain; and the circumstance of being born in this island forms a tie of friendship between individuals in the other quarters of the globe. The study of history operates somewhat in the same manner, though not perhaps in the same degree. By transporting us in imagination over the surface of this planet, and by assembling before

our view the myriads who have occupied it before us, it serves to define to our thoughts more distinctly the particular community to which we belong, and strengthens the bond of relationship that unites us to all its members.

I shall only add further on this subject, that, when the extent and population of a country are so *very* great as to give it a decided pre-eminence among neighbouring nations, it has a tendency to produce, (partly by interesting the vanity, and partly by dazzling the imagination,) an attachment to *national glory*, which operates both on the vulgar and on men of better education, in a way extremely analogous to the instinctive patriotism felt by the member of a small community. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the national character of the French prior to the late Revolution, nor does it seem to have altered in this respect since that event, if we may judge from the indignation with which the idea of a confederate republic has always been received. A feeling of the same kind may be traced in various expressions employed by Livy in the Preface to his Roman History. "Utcunque erit, juvabit tamen rerum gestarum memoriæ principis terrarum populi, pro virili parte, et ipsum consuluisse; et si in tanta scriptorum turbâ mea fama in obscuro sit, nobilitate ac magnitudine eorum qui nomini officient meo me consoler. Res est præterea et immensi operis, ut quæ supra septingentesimum annum repetatur, et quæ ab exiguis profecta initiis eo creverit, ut jam magnitudine laboret sua: et legentium plerisque haud dubito, quin primæ origines proximaque originibus, minus præbitura voluptatis sint, festinantibus ad hæc nova, quibus jampridem prævalentis populi vires se ipsæ conficiunt." The very danger which such an empire was exposed to from its enormous magnitude, and from the seeds of destruction which it carried in its bosom, seems to heighten the patriotic affection of the historian, by awakening an anxious solicitude for its impending fate. The contrast between this feeling of national pride, and a melancholy anticipation of those calamities to which national greatness leads, gives the principal charm to this exquisite composition.

SECT. V.—OF PITY TO THE DISTRESSED.

As the unfortunate chiefly stand in need of our assistance, so there is provided in every breast a most powerful advocate in their favour; an advocate, to whose solicitations it is impossible even for the most obdurate to turn always a deaf ear. The appropriation of the word *humanity* to this part of our constitution, affords sufficient evidence of the common sentiments of mankind upon the subject.

> "Mollissima corda
> Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
> Quæ lacrymas dedit. Hæc nostri pars optima sensûs.
> . . . . . Separat hoc nos
> A grege mutorum."[1]

The general principle of benevolence, or of good will to our fellow-creatures, (of which I shall treat afterwards, when I come to consider our Moral duties,) as it disposes us to promote the happiness of others, so it restrains us from doing them evil, and prompts us to relieve their distresses. The office of compassion or pity is more limited. It impels us to relieve distress; it serves as a check on resentment and selfishness, and the other principles which lead us to injure the interests of others; but it does not prompt us to the communication of positive happiness. Its object is to *relieve*, and sometimes to *prevent*, suffering; but not to augment the enjoyment of those who are already easy and comfortable. We are disposed to do this by the general spirit of benevolence, but not by the particular affection of pity.

The final cause of this constitution of our nature is very ingeniously and happily pointed out by Dr. Butler, in his second sermon, *On Compassion*. This profound philosopher observes, that "supposing men to be capable of happiness and of misery in degrees equally intense, yet they are liable to the latter during longer periods of time than they are susceptible of the former. We frequently see men suffering the agonies of pain for days, weeks, and months together, without any intermission, except

[1] Juvenal, *Sat.* [xv. 131.]

the short suspensions of sleep,—a stretch of misery to which no state of high enjoyment can approach in point of duration. Such, too, is our constitution, and that of the world around us, that the sources of our sufferings are placed much more within the power of other men than the sources of our pleasures, so that there is no individual, (however incapable he may be to add to the happiness of his fellow-creatures,) who has it not in his power to do them great and extensive mischief. To prevent the abuse of this power when we are under the influence of any of the angry passions, by means of a particular affection tending to check the excess of resentment, was therefore of more consequence to the comfort of human life than it would have been to superadd to the general principle of good will a particular affection prompting to the communication of positive enjoyment. The power we have over the misery of our fellow-creatures being a more important trust than our power of promoting the happiness of those already comfortable, the former stood more in need of a guard to check its excesses than the latter of a *stimulus* to animate its exertions. But farther, as it is more in our power to *communicate* misery than happiness, so it is more in our power to *relieve* misery than to superadd enjoyment. Hence an additional reason for implanting in our constitution the affection of compassion, while there is none analogous to it urging us by an instinctive impulse to acts of general benevolence."

The final causes of compassion, then, are to prevent and to relieve misery—to *prevent* misery by checking the violence of our own angry passions; and to *relieve* misery by calling our attention, and engaging our good offices, to every object of distress within our reach. The latter is the more common and the more important of its offices, at least in the present state of society. And it is this which I have chiefly in view in the following observations.

I have said that compassion calls or arrests our attention to the distressed objects within our reach. When we are immersed in the business of the world, or intoxicated with its pleasures, we are apt to overlook, and sometimes to withdraw

from scenes of misery. It is the office of compassion to plead the cause of the wretched, or rather to solicit us to take their case under our consideration; for so strong is the sense which all men have of the duty of beneficence, that, if they could only be brought to exercise their powers of reflection on the facts before them, they could scarcely ever fail to relieve distress, when, in consistency with other obligations, it was in their power to do so. One striking proof of this is, that the active zeal of humanity is (*cæteris paribus*) strongest in those men whose warm imaginations present to them lively pictures of the sufferings of others; and that there is scarcely any man, however callous and selfish, whose beneficence may not be called forth by a skilful and eloquent description of any scene of misery. General considerations with regard to our social duties will often have little weight; but if the attention can only be fixed to facts, nature, in most instances, accomplishes the rest. Hence the importance in our constitution of the affection of compassion, which, amidst the tumult of business or of pleasure, stops us suddenly in our career, and reminds us that we have social duties to fulfil;—calls upon us to examine the claims of the helpless, and aggravates our guilt if we disregard its admonition.

Compassion, according to the view now given of it, is an *instinctive impulse* prompting to a particular object, analogous in many respects to the animal appetites already considered. It is, indeed, one of the most amiable, and one of the most important parts of our constitution; but it is not an object of moral approbation. Our duty lies in the proper regulation of it—in considering with attention the facts it recommends to our notice, and in acting with respect to them as reason and conscience prescribe. It is hardly necessary for me to add, that there are cases in which these inform us that we *ought not* to follow the impulse of compassion, and in which it is no less meritorious in us to resist its solicitations, than to deny ourselves the unlawful gratification of a sensual appetite; and even in those instances in which our duty calls us to obey its impulse, our merit does not arise from the affection we feel, but from doing what our conscience approves of as *right* on a

deliberate consideration of the action we are to perform, when examined in all its bearings and consequences.

Notwithstanding, however, the unquestionable truth of this theoretical conclusion, it is nevertheless certain, that a strong and habitual tendency to indulge this affection affords no slight presumption in favour of the worth and benevolence of a character. Whoever reflects, on the one hand, upon its general coincidence with what a sense of duty prescribes; and upon the other, on the nature of those circumstances by which its indulgence is checked and discouraged among men of the world, will, I apprehend, readily assent to the truth of this observation. The poet,* perhaps, went a little too far when he stated as a general and unqualified maxim, *Ἀγαθοὶ ἀριδάκρυες ἄνδρες*;[1] but, upon the whole, I am inclined to think that this maxim, with all the exceptions which may contradict it, will be found much nearer to the fact than they who have been trained in the schools of fashionable *persiflage* will be disposed to acknowledge.

The philosophers who attempt to resolve the whole of human conduct into self-love have adopted various theories to explain the affection of pity. Without stopping to examine these, I shall confine myself to a simple statement of the fact,

* [The words are recorded as an Adage by Zenobius and Suidas; they are also extant in the *Stromateus*, or Collection of proverbial verses to be found in the *Adagia Greca* of Schottus. The line cannot, I believe, be referred to any poet.—*Ed.*]

[1] "Good men are prone to shed tears."—"The poets," says Mr. Wollaston, "who of all writers undertake to imitate nature most, oft introduce even their heroes weeping."—(See how Homer represents Ulysses. *Odyssey*, E. 151, 2, 7, 8.) "The tears of men," the same author finely adds, "are in truth very different from the cries and ejulations of children. They are *silent streams*, and flow from other causes, commonly some tender, or perhaps philosophical reflection. It is easy to see how hard hearts and dry eyes come to be fashionable. But for all that it is certain the *glandulæ lachrymales* were not made for nothing."—*Religion of Nature Delineated*, p. 258, 8th edit.

It is remarked by Descartes, that the tears of children and of old men (in which both are apt to indulge) flow from different sources. "Senes sæpe lachrimantur ex amore et gaudio. Infantes raro ex lætitia lachrimantur, sæpius ex tristitia, etiam quam amor non comitatur."—(*De Passionibus*, Secunda Pars, Articulus cxxxiii.) The important facts here described have seldom been remarked; and the statement of them does honour to Descartes as an attentive and accurate observer of human nature in the beginning and towards the close of its history.

which statement will at once show how far all of these are erroneous, and will point out the oversight in which they have originated. Whoever reflects carefully on the effect produced on his own mind by objects which excite his pity must be sensible that it is a compounded one; and, therefore, unless we are at pains to analyze it carefully, we may be apt to mistake some one of the ingredients for the whole combination.

On the sight of distress we are distinctly conscious, I think, of three things:—1*st*, A painful emotion in consequence of the distress we see. 2*d*, A selfish desire to remove the cause of this uneasiness. 3*d*, A disposition to relieve the distress from a *benevolent* and disinterested concern about the sufferer. If we had not this last disposition, and if it were not stronger than the former, the sight of a distressed object would invariably prompt us to fly from it, as we frequently see those men do in whom the second ingredient prevails over the third. In ordinary cases the impulse of pity attaches us to the cause of our sufferings; and we cling to it, even although we are conscious that we can afford no relief but the consolation of sympathy;—a demonstrative proof that one at least of the ingredients of pity (and in most men the prevailing ingredient) is purely disinterested in its nature and origin.

Although, however, this observation seems to me decisive against the theory in question, in whatever form it may be proposed, I cannot omit this opportunity of examining a new modification of the same hypothesis, which occurs in Mr. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The view of the subject which he has taken has the merit of entire originality, and, like all his other speculations and opinions, derives a strong recommendation from the splendid abilities and exemplary worth of the author. I hope, therefore, that the critical strictures upon it which I am now to offer will not be considered as a useless or unreasonable interruption of the discussions in which we are at present engaged.

Before entering on this argument, I shall just mention another hypothesis concerning the origin of compassion, which seems to me to approach more nearly to that of Mr. Smith

than anything else I have met with in the works of his predecessors. I allude to the account of *Pity* given by Hobbes, who defines it to be "the imagination or fiction of *future* calamity to ourselves proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity."[1] In what respect this theory *coincides* with Mr. Smith's, will appear from the remarks I am now to make. In the meantime I shall only observe how completely the futility of Hobbes's definition is exposed by a single remark of Butler. "That, if it were just, it would follow that the most fearful temper would be the most compassionate."[2] We may add too, that our pity is more strongly excited by the distresses of an infant than by those of the aged, although the former are such as we cannot possibly be exposed to suffer a *second time*, and the *latter* such as we must expect to endure sooner or latter, if the period of life should be prolonged to that term, which the weakness of most individuals disposes them to wish for.

The leading principles of Mr. Smith's theory, in as far as it applies to *pity* or *compassion*, are comprehended in the three following propositions.* 1*st*, That it is from our own experience alone we can form any idea of the sufferings of another person on any particular occasion.

2*d*, That the only manner in which we can form this idea is by supposing ourselves in the same circumstances with him, and then conceiving how we should be affected if we were so situated.

3*d*, That the uneasiness which we feel in consequence of the sufferings of another arises from our conceiving those sufferings to be our own.

The *first* of these propositions is unquestionable. Our no-

[1] [*Human Nature*, chap. ix. § 10.—*Ed.*]—Descartes has adopted this theory of Hobbes. "Illi qui se valde debiles sentiunt et obnoxios adversæ fortunæ videntur aliis propensiores ad misericordiam, quia sibi repræsentant alienum malum ceu quod sibi quoque queat evenire, et sic ad misericordiam moventur magis ex amore sui quàm aliorum."—*De Passionibus*, Tertia Pars, Articulus clxxxvi.

[2] See an excellent Note on Sermon V. It contains an important hint about *sympathy*, which Mr. Smith has prosecuted with great ingenuity.

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part I. sect. i.]

tions of pain and of suffering are undoubtedly derived, *in the first instance*, from our own experience.

The *second* proposition is perhaps expressed with too great a degree of latitude. That in order to understand completely the sufferings of our neighbours in any particular instance, it is necessary for us to have been once placed in circumstances somewhat similar to his, I believe to be true, and there can be no doubt that it is frequently useful to us to collect our attention to the distresses of others, by conceiving their situation to be ours; but it does not appear to me that this process of the mind takes place in every case in which we are affected by the sight of misery. When we are once satisfied that a particular situation is a natural source of misery to the person placed in it, the bare perception of the situation is sufficient to excite an unpleasant emotion in the spectator, without any reference whatever to himself. This is easily explicable on the common doctrine of *the association of ideas*.

Nor is this all. The looks, the gestures, the tones of distress, speak in a moment from heart to heart, and affect us with an anguish more exquisitely piercing than any we are able to produce by all the various expedients we can employ to assist the imagination in conceiving the situation of the sufferer.

But, abstracting from these considerations, and granting the second proposition in all its extent, the third proposition is by no means a necessary consequence of it; for, even in those cases in which we endeavour to awaken our compassion for the sufferings of our neighbour by conceiving ourselves placed in his situation, our compassion is not founded on a belief that the sufferings are ours. So long as we conceive ourselves in distress, we feel a certain degree of uneasiness; but this is not the uneasiness of compassion. In order to excite this, we must apply to our neighbour the result of what we have experienced in ourselves; or in other words, having formed an idea of what he suffers by bringing his case home to ourselves, we must carry our attention back to *him* before he becomes the object of our pity. Nor is there anything mysterious or wonderful in this process of the mind. That we are so formed as to expect that

the operation of the same cause, in similar circumstances, will be attended with the same result, might be shown from a thousand instances. It is thus, that, having tried a physical experiment on certain substances, I take for granted that the result of a similar experiment, on similar substances, will be the same. It is thus that I conclude with the most perfect confidence, that a wound given to my body in a particular organ would be instantly fatal; although it is worthy of remark, that in this case I have no direct evidence from experience that the internal structure of my body is similar to those of the bodies which anatomists have hitherto examined. Now, I apprehend, it is in the same manner that, having once experienced the pain produced by an instrument of torture applied to myself, I take for granted that the effect will be the same when it is applied to another. In consequence of this application, the sentiment of compassion arises in my mind, during the continuance of which my attention is completely engrossed, not about myself, but about the real sufferer.

And indeed, if the case were otherwise, compassion would be ultimately resolvable into a selfish principle, and those men would be most ready to feel the distresses of others, who are most impatient of their own. A remark similar to this (as I already observed, p. 193) is made by Dr. Butler, with respect to a theory of Hobbes, who defines pity to be the fiction of future calamity to ourselves from the sight of the present calamity of another. "Were this the case," says Butler, "the most fearful tempers would be the most compassionate." According to Mr. Smith, pity arises from the fiction, not of *future*, but of *present* calamity to ourselves. The two theories approach very nearly to each other, and the same answer is applicable to both.[1]

[1] So far, indeed, is it from being true that those who are most impatient under their personal distresses are the most prone to commiserate the sorrows of others, that I apprehend the reverse of this supposition will be found agreeable to universal experience. The most unfeeling characters I have ever known, have been men not only tremblingly alive to the slightest evil which affected themselves, but whose whole attention seemed manifestly to be engrossed with their own comforts and luxuries. On the other hand, the nearest approaches I have happened to witness to stoical patience and fortitude under severe suf

In further proof that the distress produced by the sufferings of others arises from a conception that these distresses are our own, Mr. Smith mentions a variety of facts which he thinks establish his doctrine with demonstrative evidence. "When we see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, we naturally shrink and draw back our own leg, or our own arm; and when it does fall, we feel it in some measure, and are hurt by it as well as the sufferer. The mob, when they are gazing at a dancer on the slack rope, naturally writhe and twist and balance their own bodies as they see him do, and as they feel that they must themselves do, if in his situation." . . . "In general," he observes, "that as to be in pain or distress of any kind excites the most excessive sorrow, so to conceive or to imagine that we are in it, excites some degree of the same emotion, in proportion to the vivacity or dulness of the conception."*

The facts here appealed to by Mr. Smith are, indeed, extremely curious, and I do not pretend to explain them. They are not, however, singular facts in our constitution, but belong to that class of phenomena which medical writers refer to what they call *the Principle of Imitation*.[1] Of this kind are the contagious effects of hysterics—of yawning—of laughter—of crying, &c. In these last cases Mr. Smith would suppose, if he were to apply the same reasoning he uses in analogous instances, that the effect arises from our conceiving ludicrous or sorrowful ideas similar to those by which these emotions are produced. But the primary effect seems to be produced on the body, and the secondary effect on the mind; somewhat in the same manner in which we can excite a sensible degree of the passion of

fering, have been invariably accompanied with a peculiarly strong disposition to social tenderness and sympathy. Gray alludes to this contrast in his *Hymn to Adversity*—[*Ode on a distant Prospect of Eton College*:]—

"To each his sufferings; all are men
Condemn'd alike to groan;
The feeling for another's pain,
The unfeeling for his own."

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part I. sect. i. chap. 1.]

[1] In the *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. III. [Part ii. chap. 2; above, *Works*, Vol. IV. p. 116, *seq.*] I have distinguished this law of our nature by the more precise and unequivocal title of the principle of *Sympathetic* Imitation. [See also *Outlines*, &c. p. 35, Vol. II. of *Works*.]

anger in our own breast, by imitating the looks and gestures which are expressive of rage. It does not appear to me that this bodily contagion of the expression of passion has any immediate connexion with our fellow-feeling with distress. If it had, those would be most liable to it who felt the most deeply for the sorrows of others,—a conclusion which is certainly not agreeable to fact. During the madness of Belvidera, those who are the most powerfully affected by the representation, are not the nervous ladies who catch from the actress something similar to a hysteric paroxysm; but they who, retaining their own reason, reflect on the train of misfortunes which have unhinged her mind, and who weep for her madness, not so much as a misfortune in itself, as an indication of that conflict of passions by which it was produced. The effect in the former case depends on a peculiar irritability and mobility of the bodily frame, altogether unconnected with any of the moral sympathies or sensibilities of our nature.

SECT. VI.—OF RESENTMENT AND THE VARIOUS OTHER ANGRY AFFECTIONS GRAFTED UPON IT, (COMMONLY CONSIDERED BY ETHICAL WRITERS AS MALEVOLENT AFFECTIONS.)

The names which are given to these affections in common discourse are various, *Hatred*, *Jealousy*, *Envy*, *Revenge*, *Misanthropy*; but it may be doubted if there be any principle of this kind implanted by nature in the mind, excepting the principle of *Resentment*, the others being grafted on this stock by our erroneous opinions and criminal habits.

Emulation, indeed, (which is unquestionably an original principle of action,) is treated of by Dr. Reid under the title of the *Malevolent Affections*. But I formerly [pp. 160, 161] gave my reasons for classing this principle with the *desires*, and not with the *affections*. I acknowledged, indeed, that emulation is often accompanied with ill-will to our rival; but the malevolent affection is only a concomitant circumstance; and it is not the affection, but the desire of superiority, which can be justly regarded as the active principle.

Nor is this sentiment of ill-will a *necessary* concomitant of the desire of superiority; for there is unquestionably a solid distinction between emulation and envy, the latter of which is a corruption of the former, disgraceful to the character, and ruinous to the happiness of whoever indulges it. In the case of envy, the malevolent affection arises, I believe, generally from some error of the judgment, or some illusion of the imagination, leading us to refer the cause of our own want of success either to some injustice on the part of our rival, or to an unjust partiality in the world which overrates his merits and undervalues ours. In both of these cases the desire of superiority generates malevolent affections, by first leading us to apprehend *injustice*, and thus exciting the natural passion of resentment.

Before proceeding to consider this principle of action, it may be proper again to remark, that, when the epithet *Malevolent* is applied to it, that word must not be understood to imply anything criminal, at least so long as resentment is restrained within proper bounds, after having been originally excited by real injustice. The epithet malevolent is used only to express that temporary ill-will towards the author of the apprehended injustice with which resentment is necessarily accompanied till it begins to subside.

One of the first authors who examined with success this part of our constitution, and illustrated the important purposes to which it is subservient, was Bishop Butler, in an excellent discourse printed among his Sermons.* The hints he has thrown out have evidently been of great use both to Lord Kames and Mr. Smith in their speculations concerning the principles of morals.

To Butler we are indebted for the illustration of a very important distinction (which had been formerly hinted at by Hobbes) between instinctive and deliberate resentment. Instinctive resentment operates in men exactly as in the lower animals, arising necessarily from any feeling of pain excited by external objects, and prompting us to a retaliation upon the cause of our suffering without any exercise whatever of reflection and reason. It is thus that a child beats the ground after

* [*Sermons.—Upon Human Nature.*]

it has hurt itself by a fall, and that we sometimes see a passionate man wreak his vengeance on inanimate objects by dashing them to pieces. This species of resentment, however, subsides instantly, and we are ready next moment to smile at the absurdity of our conduct.

Deliberate resentment is excited only by intentional injury, and therefore implies a sense of justice, or of moral good or evil. It is plainly peculiar to a rational nature, and perhaps it is not very distinguishable from instinctive or animal resentment in the ruder state of our own species. It is observed by Dr. Robertson, that "the desire of vengeance which takes possession of the heart of savages, resembles the instinctive rage of an animal rather than the passion of a man, and that it turns with undiscerning fury even against inanimate objects." He adds, "that, if struck with an arrow in battle, they will tear it from the wound, break and bite it with their teeth, and dash it on the ground."[1]

This distinction, too, is much insisted on by Lord Kames in various parts of his writings; and it is from him that I have borrowed the phrase of *instinctive resentment*, which he has substituted instead of *sudden resentment*, employed by Butler.

The final cause of instinctive resentment was plainly to defend us against sudden violence, (where reason would come too late to our assistance,) by rousing the powers both of mind and body to instant and vigorous exertion. A number of our other instincts are perfectly analogous to this. Such, for example, is the instinctive effort we make to recover ourselves when we are in danger of losing our balance,[2] and the instinctive despatch

[1] *America*, Vol. I. pp. 351, 352.

[2] Although I have followed Dr. Reid's language in calling this an *instinctive* effort, I am abundantly aware that the expression is not unexceptionable. On this head I perfectly agree (excepting in one single point) with the following remarks of Gravesande:—

"Il y a quelque chose d'admirable dans le moyen ordinaire dont les hommes se servent, pour s'empêcher de tomber: car dans le tems que, par quelque mouvement, le poids du corps s'augmente d'une côté, un autre mouvement rétablit l'équilibre dans l'instant. On attribue communément la chose à un *instinct naturel* quoiqu'il faille nécessairement l'attribuer à un art perfectionné par l'exercice.

"Les enfans ignorent absolument cet art dans les premières années de leur vie; ils l'apprennent peu à peu, et s'y

with which we shut the eye-lids when an object is made to pass rapidly before the face. In general it will be found, that, as nature has taken upon herself the care of our preservation during the infancy of our reason, so in every case in which our existence is threatened by dangers, against which reason is unable to supply a remedy with sufficient promptitude, she continues this guardian care during the whole of life.

The disposition which we sometimes feel, when under the influence of instinctive resentment, to wreak our vengeance upon inanimate objects, has suggested to Dr. Reid* a very curious query, Whether, upon such an occasion, we may have a momentary belief that the object is alive? For my own part

perfectionnent, parce qu'ils ont continuellement occasion de s'y exercer; exercice qui, dans la suite, n'exige presque plus aucune attention de leur part; tout comme un musicien remue les doigts, suivant les règles de l'art, pendant qu'il apperçoit à peine qu'il y fasse le moindre attention."—*Œuvres Philosophiques* de M. 'SGravesande, p. 121, 2de Partie. Amsterdam, 1774.

The only thing I am disposed to object to in the foregoing passage, is that clause where the author ascribes *the effort in question* to an *art*. Is it not manifestly as wide of the truth to refer it to *this* source as to a pure instinct?

The word art implies intelligence,—the perception of an *end*, and the choice of *means*. But where is there any appearance of either in an operation common to the whole species, (not excepting the idiot and the insane,) and which is practised as successfully by the brutes as by rational creatures?

Elephants (it is well known) were taught by the ancients to walk on the tight rope, on which occasions their trunk probably performed the office of a pole. Whoever has seen a peacock walk in a windy day along the branch of a tree, must have observed the address with which he avails himself of his tail for the same purpose.

Nothing, however, can place in a stronger light the capacity of the brutes to acquire the nice management of the centre of gravity than the mathematical exactness with which we may daily see horses in the *circus* adjusting the inclination of their bodies to the velocity of their circular speed. Here, indeed, a good deal is to be ascribed to the effects of human discipline, but by far the greater part of the ground-work is laid by nature in the instinctive dispositions of the animal. The acquisition seems to be almost as easy as that of the habits which constitute the acquired perceptions of sight.

In one of the last volumes of Dr. Clarke's *Travels* there is a figure of a goat, whom the author saw standing with its four feet collected together on the top of a cylindrical piece of wood of a few inches diameter. Nobody can doubt that the effects of discipline were greatly facilitated in this instance by the natural instincts of the goat, which probably accommodated themselves with very little instruction to the artificial circumstances in which they were forced to operate.

* [*Active Powers*, Essay III. Part ii. chap. 5.—*Works*, p. 569.]

I confess my inclination to answer this question in the affirmative. I agree with Dr. Reid in thinking, that, unless we had such a belief, our conduct could not possibly be what it frequently is, and that it is not till this momentary belief is at an end that our conduct appears to ourselves to be absurd and ludicrous. With respect to infants there are many facts beside that now under consideration which render it probable that their first apprehensions lead them to believe all the objects around them to be animated, and that it is only in consequence of experience and reason that they come to form the notion of insentient substances. If this be the case, the illusion of imagination which leads us to ascribe life to things inanimate, when we are under the influence of instinctive resentment, may perhaps be owing to a momentary relapse into those apprehensions which were habitually familiar to us in the first years of our existence.

But whatever theory we adopt on the subject, there can be no doubt about the fact, that the final cause of this law of our nature was to secure and guard us against the sudden effects of external injuries in cases where there is not time for deliberation and judgment. With respect to the injuries we are liable to from our fellow-creatures, it secures us farther by its effect in restraining *them* from acts of violence. "It is a kind of penal statute promulgated by nature, the execution of which is committed to the sufferer."[1]

In man the instinctive resentment subsides as soon as he is satisfied that no injury was intended; and it is only *intentional* injury that is the object of settled and deliberate resentment. The final cause of this species of resentment is analogous to that of the other,—to serve as a check on those men whose violent or malignant passions might lead them to disturb the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

In order to secure still more effectually so very important an end, we are so formed, that the injustice offered to *others*, as well as to ourselves, awakens our resentment against the aggressor, and prompts us to take part in the redress of their

[1] Reid, [*Ibid.*]

grievances. In this case the emotion we feel is more properly denoted in our language by the word *indignation*, [as most appropriately in Greek by *Nemesis ;*] but (as Butler has remarked) our principle of action is in both cases fundamentally the same,—an aversion or displeasure at injustice and cruelty which interests us in the punishment of those by whom they have been exhibited. Resentment, therefore, when restrained within due bounds, seems to be rather a sentiment of hatred against vice than an affection of ill-will against any of our fellow-creatures; and, on this account, I am somewhat doubtful (notwithstanding the apology I have already made for the title of this section) whether I have not followed Dr. Reid too closely in characterizing resentment, considered as an original part of the constitution of man, by the epithet of *Malevolent.**

An additional confirmation of this doctrine arises from the following consideration: That, in candid and generous minds, the whole object of resentment is to convince the person who has injured them that he has treated them unjustly,—to show him that he has formed an unfair estimate of their characters and of their talents, and to obtain such a superiority over him in point of *power* as to be able, by a generous forgiveness of his aggressions, to convert his malice into gratitude. In other words, in such minds the great object of resentment is to correct the faults of the delinquent, and to make a friend of an enemy.

This last observation points out (by the way) the final cause of a very remarkable circumstance accompanying the affection of resentment when excited by an injury offered to ourselves. We desire not only the punishment of the offender, but that we should have the power of inflicting the punishment with our own hand. It is probable that this originates partly in our love of power; but I believe it is chiefly owing to a secret wish of convincing our enemy, by the magnanimity of our conduct, how much he had mistaken the object of his hatred. In the mean and the malicious, the passion of revenge is gratified by any suffering inflicted on an enemy, whether by an indifferent person or by the hand of Heaven.

* [*Active Powers*, Essay III. Part ii. chap. 5.—*Works*, p. 566, *seq.*]

After all, however, that I have advanced in justification of this part of the human constitution, I must acknowledge that there is no principle of action which requires more pains, even in the best minds, to restrain it within the bounds of moderation. The imagination exaggerates the injuries that we ourselves have received; and mistaken views of human nature, concurring with low spirits or disappointed ambition, lead us to ascribe to our opponents worse motives than those from which they really have acted. We seldom, too, are sufficiently attentive to the situations and feelings of other men, and even where we do make an effort to place ourselves in their circumstances, it is not every man who is possessed of the degree of imagination requisite for that purpose. Our own sufferings, at the same time, are always present to our view, and force themselves on the notice of the most thoughtless without any effort on their part. And hence it is, that an irritability to personal injury is often accompanied with a callousness to the feelings of others, and even with a disposition to put unfavourable constructions on their actions.

In order to check the excesses to which this ungovernable passion is apt to lead us, nature has made a beautiful provision in that sentiment of indignation which the sight of injustice excites in the breast of the unconcerned spectator. This sentiment interests society in general in the cause of the oppressed, and serves to protect the weak against the wrongs of the powerful. As it is not, however, liable to the same excesses with the passion of resentment excited by a personal injury, it sympathizes only with the injured while his retaliations are restrained within the bounds of moderation. When resentment rises to cruel and relentless revenge, unconcerned spectators become disposed to abandon the cause they had espoused, and to transfer their protection to the original aggressor.

It does not follow from this observation, that resentment and indignation are two distinct principles; for the whole difference between them may be accounted for from the different views we naturally take of our own wrongs and those of others. They are both founded in a sentiment of aversion and ill-will

excited by injustice, but the one is more apt to pass the bounds of moderation than the other, in consequence of the facts being more strongly obtruded on our notice, and often exaggerated by the heightenings of imagination.

Mr. Smith has endeavoured, on the principles now stated, to account for the origin of our sense of justice.* The passion of resentment, he thinks, when excited by a personal injury, would set no bounds to its gratification, but would lead us to sacrifice everything to revenge. But, as we find that other men would not go along with us when our revenge ceases to bear any proportion to the original injury, we learn to adjust our retaliations not to our own feelings, but to those of the impartial spectator. Hence the origin of our sense of justice, our regard for which arises from our desire of obtaining the sympathy and the support of society.

I shall afterwards state some objections to this theory, which appear to me unanswerable. In particular, I shall attempt to show, that, so far is our idea of justice from being posterior to the affections of resentment and indignation, and to a comparison between our own feelings and those of other men, that the very emotion of deliberate resentment presupposes the idea of justice, and of what is morally right and wrong. The fact, however, on which the theory proceeds, is a most important one, and Mr. Smith has had great merit in illustrating it so fully. Lord Kames, in his *Historical Law Tracts*, has made a happy application of it to explain the origin and progress of criminal law. Which of these two authors first conceived the idea of applying it to *jurisprudence* does not appear to me to be perfectly certain. Both of them have evidently been much indebted in their speculations concerning this part of human nature to the Sermons of Bishop Butler.

I shall conclude this subject at present with remarking, that, as all the benevolent affections are accompanied with pleasant emotions, so all the malevolent affections are sources of pain and disquiet. This is true even of resentment, how justly soever it may be roused by the injurious conduct of others.

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part II. sect. ii.]

Here, too, we may perceive a final cause perfectly analogous to that of which I formerly took notice in treating of the benevolent affections. As the pleasant emotion accompanying *these* seems evidently to have been intended as an incitement to us to cultivate and cherish them, so the painful feeling accompanying resentment, and every other affection which is hostile to our fellow-creatures, serves as a check on the habitual indulgence of them, and induces us, as soon as the first impulse of passion is over, and reason begins to reassume her empire, to obliterate every trace of them from the memory. Dr. Reid has expressed this last observation with great beauty, and has enforced it with uncommon felicity of illustration. "When we consider that, on the one hand, every benevolent affection is pleasant in its nature, is health to the soul and a cordial to the spirits; that nature has made even the outward expression of benevolent affection in the countenance pleasant to every beholder, and the chief ingredient of beauty in the *human face divine;* that, on the other hand, every malevolent affection, not only in its faulty excesses, but in its moderate degrees, is vexation and disquiet to the mind, and even gives deformity to the countenance, it is evident that by these signals nature loudly admonishes us to use the former as our daily bread, both for health and pleasure, but to consider the latter as a nauseous medicine, which is never to be taken without necessity, and even then in no greater quantity than the necessity requires.*

After the clear, and, at the same time, cautious terms in which Butler, Kames, and Smith have expressed themselves concerning *Resentment*, it is surprising to find some late writers of considerable name speaking of the *pleasure of Revenge* as a natural gratification, of which every man is entitled to look forward to the enjoyment; and which, after the establishment of the political union, every man has a right to insist upon at the hands of the criminal magistrate. Such, in particular, seems to be the opinion of Mr. Bentham, and of his very ingenious and eloquent commentator, M. Dumont. "Toute

* [*On the Active Powers*, Essay III. Part ii. chap. 5.—*Works*, p. 570.]

espèce de satisfaction entrainant une peine pour le délinquant, produit naturellement un plaisir de vengeance pour la partie lésée. Ce plaisir est un gain. Il rappelle la parabole de Samson. C'est le miel recueilli dans la gueule du lion. Produit sans frais, résultat net d'une opération nécessaire à d'autres titres, c'est une jouissance à cultiver comme toute autre ; car le plaisir de la vengeance, considéré abstraitement, n'est comme tout autre plaisir, qu'un bien en lui-même. Il est innocent tant qu'il se renferme dans les bornes de la loi ; il ne devient criminel qu'au moment où il les franchit. Utile à l'individu, ce mobile est même utile au public, ou pour mieux dire nécessaire ; c'est cette satisfaction vindicative qui délie la langue des témoins ; c'est elle qui anime l'accusateur, et l'engage au service de la justice, malgré les embarras, les dépenses, les inimitiés auxquelles il s'expose. C'est elle qui surmonte la pitié publique dans la punition des coupables. . . . .

" Je sais bien que les moralistes communs, toujours dupés de mots, ne sauroient entrer dans cette vérité. L'esprit de vengeance est odieux ; toute satisfaction puisée dans cette source est vicieuse ; le pardon des injures est la plus belle des vertus. Sans doute, les caractères implacables, qu'aucune satisfaction n'adoucit, sont odieux, et doivent l'être. L'oubli des injures est une vertu nécessaire à l'humanité, mais c'est une vertu quand la justice a fait son œuvre, quand elle a fourni ou refusé une satisfaction. Avant cela, oublier les injures, c'est inviter à en commettre ; ce n'est pas être l'ami, mais l'ennemi de la société. Qu'est-ce que la méchanceté pourroit désirer de plus qu'un arrangement où les offences seroient toujours suivies de pardon."[1]

The observations above quoted from Butler, Kames, and Smith, will at once point out the limitations with which this passage must be understood, and will furnish a triumphant reply to it where it departs from the truth.

[1] Bentham, *De la Satisfaction Vindicative*, Trad. par Dumont.

BOOK SECOND.

OF OUR RATIONAL[1] AND GOVERNING PRINCIPLES OF ACTION.

CHAPTER I.

OF A PRUDENTIAL REGARD TO OUR OWN HAPPINESS, OR, WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED BY MORALISTS, THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-LOVE.

THE constitution of man, if it were composed merely of the *active principles* hitherto mentioned, would, in some important respects, be analogous to that of the brutes. His *reason*, however, renders his nature and condition, on the whole, essentially different from theirs; and, by elevating him to the rank of *a moral agent*, distinguishes him from the lower animals still more remarkably than by the superiority it imparts to his intellectual endowments.

Of this want of reason in the brutes, it is an obvious result, that they are incapable of looking forward to *consequences*, or of comparing together the different gratifications of which they are susceptible; and, accordingly, as far as we can perceive,

[1] To various active principles which have been already under our consideration, such, for instance, as the desire of knowledge, the desire of esteem, pity to the distressed, &c. &c. the epithet *rational* may undoubtedly be applied in one sense with propriety, as they exclusively belong to rational beings; but they are yet of a nature essentially different from those active principles of which we are now to treat, and which I have distinguished by the title of *Rational and Governing*. My reasons for using this language will appear from the sequel.

they yield to every present impulse. Among the inhabitants of this globe, it is the exclusive prerogative of man, as an intelligent being, to take a comprehensive survey of his various principles of action, and to form plans of conduct for the attainment of his favourite objects. He is possessed, therefore, of the power of *self-government;* for how could a plan of conduct be conceived and carried into execution, without a power of refusing occasionally, to particular active principles, the gratification which they demand? This difference between the *animal* and the *rational* natures is well and concisely described by Seneca in the following words: "*Animalibus pro ratione impetus; homini pro impetu ratio.*"[1]

According to the particular active principle which influences habitually a man's conduct, his character receives its denomination of *covetous*, *ambitious*, *studious*, or *voluptuous;* and his conduct is more or less systematical as he adheres to his general plan with steadiness or inconstancy.

It is hardly necessary for me to remark, how much a man's success in his favourite pursuit depends on the systematical steadiness with which he keeps his object in view. That an uncommon measure of this quality often supplies, to a great degree, the place of genius, and that, where it is wanting, the most splendid endowments are of little value, are facts which have been often insisted on by philosophers, and which are confirmed to us by daily experience. The effects of this concentration of the attention to one particular end on the development and improvement of the intellectual powers in general, have not been equally taken notice of. They are, however, extremely remarkable, as every person will readily acknowledge, who compares the sagacity and penetration of those individuals who have enjoyed its advantages, with the weakness and incapacity and dissipation of thought produced by an undecided choice among the various pursuits which human life presents to us. Even the systematical voluptuary, while he commands a much greater variety of sensual indulgences, and continues them to a much more advanced age than the thoughtless profligate, seldom

[1] *De Ira.* II. xvi.

fails to give a certain degree of cultivation to his understanding, by employing his faculties habitually in one direction.

The only exception, perhaps, which can be mentioned to this last remark, occurs in the case of those men whose leading principle of action is VANITY, and who, as their rule of conduct is borrowed from without, must, in consequence of this very circumstance, be perpetually wavering and inconsistent in their pursuits. Accordingly, it will be found that such men, although they have frequently performed splendid actions, have seldom risen to eminence in any one particular career, unless when, by a rare concurrence of accidental circumstances, this career has been steadily pointed out to them, through the whole of their lives, by public opinion.

"Alcibiades," says a French writer, "was a man not of ambition, but of vanity,—a man whose ruling passion was to make a noise, and to furnish matter of conversation to the Athenians. He possessed the *genius* of a great man, but his *soul*, the springs of which were too much slackened to urge him to constant application, could not elevate him, but by starts, to pursuits worthy of his powers. I can scarcely bring myself to believe that a man, whose versatility was such as to enable him, when in Sparta, to assume the severe manners of a Spartan, and, when in Ionia, to indulge in the refined voluptuousness of an Ionian, had received from nature the *stamina* of a great character."[1]

To what has been now observed in favour of systematical views in the conduct of life, it may be added, that they are incomparably more conducive to *happiness* than a course of action influenced merely by occasional inclination and appetite. Lord Shaftesbury goes so far as to assert, that even the man who is uniformly and systematically bad, enjoys *more happiness* (per-

[1] "Ce n'étoit pas un *ambitieux*, mais un homme *vain* qui vouloit faire du bruit, et occuper les Athéniens. Il avoit *l'esprit* d'un grand homme; mais son *âme*, dont les ressorts amollis étoient devenus incapables d'une application constante, ne pouvoit s'élever au grand que par boutade. J'ai bien de la peine à croire, qu'un homme assez souple pour être à Sparte aussi dur et aussi sévère qu'un Spartiate; dans l'Ionie aussi recherché dans les plaisirs qu'un Ionien; fût propre à faire un grand homme."—(Quoted [anonymously] by Warburton in his note on Pope's Character of the Duke of Wharton.)

haps he would have been nearer the truth if he had contented himself with saying that he suffers less misery) than one of a more mixed and more inconsistent character. "It is the thorough profligate knave alone, the complete unnatural villain, who can anyway bid for happiness with the honest man. True interest is wholly on one side or on the other. All between is inconsistency, irresolution, remorse, vexation, and an ague fit,—from hot to cold,—from one passion to another quite contrary,—a perpetual discord of life, and an alternate disquiet and self-dislike. The only rest or repose must be through *one* determined considerate resolution, which, when once taken, must be courageously kept, and the passions and affections brought under obedience to it,—the temper steeled and hardened to the mind,—the disposition to the judgment. Both must agree, else all must be disturbance and confusion."[1]

To the same purpose Horace:—

> . . . . "Quanto constantior idem
> In vitiis, tanto levior miser, ac prior illo
> Qui jam contento, jam laxo fune laboret."[2]

Of the state of a mind originally possessed of the most splendid endowments, but where everything had been suffered to run into anarchy from the want of some controlling and steady principle of action, a masterly picture is drawn by Cicero, in the following account of Catiline.

"Utebatur hominibus improbis multis, et quidem optimis se viris deditum esse simulabat; erant apud illam illecebræ libidinum multæ; erant etiam industriæ quidam stimuli ac laboris: flagrabant libidinis vitia apud illum; vigebant etiam studia rei militaris: neque ego unquam fuisse tale monstrum in terris ullum puto, tam ex contrariis diversisque inter se pugnantibus naturæ studiis cupiditatibusque conflatum. Quis clarioribus viris quodam tempore jucundior? quis turpioribus conjunctior? quis civis meliorum partium aliquando? quis tetrior hostis huic civitati? quis in voluptatibus inquinatior?

[1] *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, Part IV. sect. i.
[2] *Sermones*, Lib. II. S. vii. 18.

quis in laboribus patientior? quis in rapacitate avarior? quis in largitione effusior?"[1]

In a person of this description, whatever indications of genius and ability he may discover, and whatever may be the great qualities he possesses, there is undoubtedly some tendency to insanity, which, if it were not the radical *source* of the evil, could hardly fail, sooner or later, to be the *effect* of a perpetual conflict between different and discordant passions. And, accordingly, this is the idea which Sallust seems to have formed of this extraordinary man. "His eyes," he observes, "had a disagreeable glare; his complexion was pale; his walk sometimes quick, sometimes slow; and his general appearance indicated a discomposure of mind approaching to madness."*

I would not be understood to insinuate by this last observation, that in every case in which we observe a conduct apparently inconsistent and irregular, we are entitled to conclude all at once, that it proceeds from accidental humour, or from a disordered understanding. The knowledge of a man's ruling passion is often a key to what appeared, on a superficial view, to be perfectly inexplicable. Some excellent reflections on this subject are to be found in the first of Pope's *Moral Essays*, where they are most happily and forcibly illustrated by the character of the Duke of Wharton.

"Search, then, the ruling passion: There alone
The wild are constant, and the cunning known;
The fool consistent, and the false sincere;
Priests, princes, women, no dissemblers here.
This clue once found unravels all the rest,
The prospect clears, and Wharton stands confest.
Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise.
Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
Women and fools must like him, or he dies."
* * * * *
"Ask you why Wharton broke through every rule,
'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool,
Nature well known, no prodigies remain,
Comets are regular and Wharton plain."†

[1] *Oratio pro M. Cœlio*, Sectt. v. vi.

* [*Conjuratio Catilinaria*, c. ii.] † [*Epistle*, i. 174.]

I have only to add to these observations of Pope, that I believe the inconsistencies he describes are chiefly to be found in the conduct of men whose ruling principle of action is vanity. I already remarked, that while every other principle which gains an ascendant over the rest has a tendency to *systematize* our course of action, vanity has, on the contrary, a tendency to *disorganize* it, leading us always to look abroad for our rule of conduct, and thereby rendering it as wavering and inconsistent as the opinions and fashions of mankind. Where vanity, therefore, is the ruling passion of any individual, a want of system may be regarded as a necessary consequence of his general character.

From the foregoing considerations, it sufficiently appears how much the nature of man is discriminated from that of the brutes, in consequence of the comprehensive view which his reason enables him to take of his different principles of action, and of the deliberate choice he has it in his power to make of the general plan of conduct he is to pursue. There is another, however, and a very important respect, in which the rational nature differs from the animal, that it is able to form the notion of *happiness*, or of what is good for it upon the whole, and to deliberate about the most effectual means of attaining it. It is owing to this distinguishing prerogative of our species that we can avail ourselves of our past experience in avoiding those enjoyments which we know will be succeeded by suffering, and in submitting to lesser evils which we know are to be instrumental in procuring us a greater accession of good. "Sed inter hominem et belluam," says Cicero, "hoc maximè interest, quod hæc tantùm quantùm sensu movetur, ad id solum quod adest, quodque præsens est, se accommodat, paullulum admodum sentiens præteritum aut futurum. Homo autem, quoniam rationis est particeps, per quam consequentia cernit, causas rerum videt, earumque prægressus et antecessiones non ignorat; similitudines comparat, et rebus præsentibus adjungit atque annectit futuras; facile totius vitæ cursum videt, ad eamque degendam præparat res necessarias."[1]

[1] *De Officiis*, Lib. I. cap. iv.

It is implied in the very idea of *happiness* that it is a desirable object, and therefore self-love is an active principle very different from those which have been hitherto considered. These, for aught we know, may be the effect of arbitrary appointment, and they have accordingly been called *implanted* principles, or principles resulting from a positive accommodation of the constitution of man to the objects with which he is surrounded. The desire of happiness may be called a *rational* principle of action, being peculiar to a rational nature, and inseparably connected with it. It is impossible to conceive a being capable of forming the notions of happiness and misery, to whom the one shall not be an object of desire, and the other of aversion.[1]

In prefixing to this chapter the title of *self-love*, the ordinary language of modern philosophy has been followed, as I am always anxious to avoid unnecessary innovations in the use of words. The expression, however, is exceptionable, for it suggests an analogy (where there is none in fact) between that regard which every rational being must necessarily have to his own happiness and those benevolent affections which attach us to our fellow-creatures. There is surely nothing in the former of these principles analogous to the affection of *love;* and, therefore, to call it by the appellation of *self-love*, is to suggest a *theory* with respect to its nature, and a theory which has no foundation in truth.

The word φιλαυτία was used among the Greeks nearly in the same sense, and introduced similar inaccuracies into their reasonings concerning the principles of morals. In our language, however, the impropriety does not stop here; for not

[1] From this constitution of the human mind, as at once *sensitive* and *rational*, arise necessarily the emotions of hope and fear, joy and sorrow. The pleasurable emotion arising from good in expectation is called *hope*, the painful emotion arising from apprehended evil is called *fear*. The words *joy* and *sorrow* are more general, applicable alike to the emotions arising from the *experience* and from the *apprehension* of good and of evil. The interest which our benevolent affections give us in the concerns of others, inspires us (more particularly in the case of those to whom we are fondly attached) with emotions analogous to those which have a reference to our own condition.

The laws which regulate these emotions connected with the sensitive nature of man, deserve a careful examination; but the subject does not fall under the present part of my plan.

only is the phrase *self-love* used as synonymous with the desire of happiness, but it is often confounded (in consequence of an unfortunate connexion in their etymology) with the word *selfishness*, which certainly, in strict propriety, denotes a very different disposition of mind. In proof of this it is sufficient to observe, that the word selfishness is always used in an unfavourable sense, whereas self-love, or the desire of happiness, is inseparable from our nature as rational and sensitive beings.

The mistaken notion, that vice consists in an excessive self-love, naturally arose from the application of the terms self-love, or φιλαυτία, to express the desire of happiness. As benevolence, or the love of mankind, constitutes, in the opinion of many moralists, the whole of virtue, so it was not unnatural to conclude, that the love of ourselves (which this mode of speaking seems to contrast with benevolence) was the radical source of all the vices. And, accordingly, this conclusion has been adopted by many writers, both ancient and modern. "If we scan," says Dr. Barrow, "the particular nature, and search into the original causes of the several kinds of naughty dispositions in our souls, and of miscarriages in our lives, we shall find inordinate self-love to be a main ingredient, and a common source of them all, so that a divine of great name had some reason to affirm, *that original sin* (or that innate distemper from which men generally become so very prone to evil and averse to good) doth consist in self-love disposing us to all kinds of irregularity and excess."[1] In this passage, Dr. Barrow refers to the opinion of Zuinglius, who has expressly called self-love the original or radical sin in our nature. "Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum originale."

It is chiefly, however, from some of our English moralists that this notion concerning the nature of vice has derived its authority; and the plausibility of their reasonings on the subject has been much aided by that indiscriminate use of the words *self-love* and *selfishness*, of which I already took notice.

I shall afterwards have occasion to show that vice does not consist in an excessive regard to our own happiness. At pre-

[1] *Sermon on Self-love.*

sent I shall only remark, in addition to what was said above with respect to the distinction between the meanings of the words self-love and selfishness, that the former is so far from expressing anything blameable, that it denotes a principle of action which we never sacrifice to any of our implanted appetites, desires, or affections, without incurring remorse and self-condemnation. When we see, for example, a man enslaved by his animal appetites, so far from considering him as under the influence of an excessive self-love, we pity and despise him for neglecting the higher enjoyments which are placed within his reach. Accordingly, those very authors who tell us that vice consists in an inordinate self-love, are forced to confess that there are some senses of the word in which it expresses a worthy and commendable principle of action. "Reason," says Dr. Barrow, "dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober regard to our true good and welfare; to our best interest and solid content; to that which (all things being rightly stated, considered, and computed) will in the end prove most beneficial and satisfactory to us; a self-love working in prosecution of such things, common sense cannot but allow and approve."*—"Τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν," says Aristotle, "δεῖ φίλαυτον εἶναι."[1] And in another passage of the same chapter, "δόξειε δ' ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι μᾶλλον φίλαυτος."

As a farther proof that selfishness is not synonymous with the desire of happiness, it may be observed, that although we apply the epithet *selfish* to avarice and to low private sensuality, we never apply it to the desire of knowledge, or to the pursuits of virtue, which are certainly sources of more exquisite pleasure than riches or sensuality can bestow.

> "Yet at the darkened eye, the withered face,
> The hoary head I never will repine:
> But spare, O time! whate'er of mental grace,
> Of candour, love, or sympathy divine,
> Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame was mine." †

Such a wish is surely dictated by the most rational view of

* [Ibidem.]

[1] *Ethica Nic.* Lib. IX. Cap. viii.

† [Beattie's *Minstrel*, Book II stanza ii.]

our real interest; and yet no man will pretend that it contains anything inconsistent with a generous and heroic mind. Had it been directed to wealth, to long life, or to the preservation of youthful beauty and vigour, it would have been universally condemned as selfish and contemptible.

This restriction of the term *selfishness* to a particular class of human pursuits, is taken notice of by Dr. Ferguson in his *Essay on Civil Society*, and seems to be considered by him as originating in a capricious, or rather in an inconsistent, use of language. "It is somewhat remarkable, that notwithstanding men value themselves so much on qualities of the mind, on parts, learning, and wit, on courage, generosity, and honour, those men are still supposed to be in the highest degree selfish, or attentive to themselves, who are most careful about animal life, and who are least mindful of rendering that life an object worthy of care. It will be difficult, however, to tell why a good understanding, a resolute and generous mind, should not, by every man in his senses, be reckoned as much parts of himself as either his stomach or his palate, and much more than his estate or his dress. The epicure who consults his physician how he may restore his relish for food, and, by creating an appetite, renew his enjoyment, might at least, with an equal regard to himself, consult how he might strengthen his affection to a parent or a child, to his country, or to mankind; and it is probable that an appetite of this sort would prove a source of enjoyment no less than the former."*

Of the difficulty here remarked by Dr. Ferguson, the solution appears to me to be this, that the word *selfishness*, when applied to a pursuit, has no reference to the *motive* from which the pursuit proceeds, but to the *effect* it has on the conduct. Neither our animal appetites, nor avarice, nor curiosity, nor the desire of moral improvement, arise from self-love, but some of these active principles disconnect us with society more than others: and consequently, though they do not indicate a greater regard for our own happiness, they betray a greater unconcern about the happiness of our neighbours. The pursuits of the

* [Part I. sect. ii. p. 21, 4th edit.]

miser have no mixture whatever of the social affections; on the contrary, they continually lead him to state his own interest in opposition to that of other men. The enjoyments of the sensualist all expire within his own person; and, therefore, whoever is habitually occupied in the search of them must of necessity neglect the duties which he owes to mankind. It is otherwise with the desire of knowledge, which is always accompanied with a strong desire of social communication, and with the love of moral excellence, which, in its practical tendency, coincides so remarkably with benevolence, that many authors have attempted to resolve the one principle into the other. How far their conclusion, in this instance, is a necessary consequence of the premises from which it is deduced, will appear hereafter.

The foregoing observations coincide so remarkably with a passage in Aristotle's *Ethics*, that I am tempted to quote it at length in the excellent English translation of Dr. Gillies. After stating the same inconsistencies in our language about self-love, which Dr. Ferguson has pointed out, Aristotle proceeds thus:—

"These contradictions cannot be reconciled but by distinguishing the different senses in which man is said to love himself. Those who reproach self-love as a vice, consider it only as it appears in worldlings and voluptuaries, who arrogate to themselves more than their due share of wealth, power, or pleasure. Such things are to the multitude the objects of earnest concern and eager contention, because the multitude regards them as prizes of the highest value, and, in endeavouring to attain them, strives to gratify its passion at the expense of its reason. This kind of self-love, which belongs to the contemptible multitude, is doubtless obnoxious to blame, and in this acceptation the word is generally taken. But should a man assume a pre-eminence in exercising justice, temperance, and other virtues, though such a man has really more true self-love than the multitude, yet nobody would impute this affection to him as a crime. Yet he takes to himself the fairest and greatest of all goods, and those the most acceptable to the

ruling principle in his nature, which is properly himself, in the same manner as the sovereignty in every community is that which most properly constitutes the state. He is said, also, to have, or not to have, the command of himself, just as this principle bears sway, or as it is subject to control; and those acts are considered as most voluntary which proceed from this legislative or sovereign power. Whoever cherishes and gratifies this ruling part of his nature is strictly and peculiarly a lover of himself, but in a quite different sense from that in which self-love is regarded as a matter of reproach; for all men approve and praise an affection calculated to produce the greatest private and the greatest public happiness; whereas they disapprove and blame the vulgar kind of self-love as often hurtful to others, and always ruinous to those who indulge it."[1]

[1] Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book IX. chap. viii.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE MORAL FACULTY.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE MORAL FACULTY, TENDING BRIEFLY TO SHOW THAT IT IS AN ORIGINAL PRINCIPLE OF OUR NATURE, AND NOT RESOLVABLE INTO ANY OTHER PRINCIPLE OR PRINCIPLES MORE GENERAL.

As some authors have supposed that vice consists in an excessive regard to our own happiness, so others have gone into the opposite extreme, by representing virtue as merely a *matter of prudence*, and a sense of duty only another name for a *rational self-love*. This view of the subject was far from being unnatural: for we find that these two principles lead in general to the same course of action; and we have every reason to believe, that, if our knowledge of the universe was more extensive, they would be found to do so in all instances whatever. Accordingly, by many of the best of the ancient moralists, our *sense of duty* was considered as resolvable into self-love, and the whole of *ethics* was reduced to this question, *What is the supreme good?* or, in other words, What is most conducive, on the whole, to our happiness?[1]

[1] The same opinion has been adopted by various philosophers of the last century in England: and it has long been the prevailing system in the continent. From the following passage in one of D'Alembert's Letters to the King of Prussia, it appears to have been considered both by the writer and by his royal correspondent as a fundamental principle in morals. "Je n'ai pas eu effet perin un moment pour lire cet excellent mémoire: et je puis être venu à V. M. que je suis absolument de son avis sur les principes qui doivent servir de base à la morale. Si V. M. veut prendre la peine de jeter les yeux sur mes *Eléments de Philosophie*, elle verra que j'y indique comme la source de la morale et du bonheur, "la liaison intime de notre véritable intérêt avec

That we have, however, a sense of duty, which is not resolvable into a regard to our happiness, appears from various considerations.

(1.) There are, in all languages, words equivalent to *duty* and to *interest*, which men have constantly distinguished in their signification. They coincide in general in their applications, but they convey very different ideas. When I wish to persuade a man to a particular action, I address some of my arguments to a sense of duty, and others to the regard he has to his own interest. I endeavour to show him that it is not only his duty, but his interest to act in the way that I recommend to him.

This distinction was expressed among the Roman moralists by the words *honestum* and *utile*. Of the former Cicero says, "quod vere dicimus, etiamsi a nullo laudetur, natura esse laudabile."[1]

Τὸ καλὸν among the Greeks corresponds, when applied to the conduct, to the *honestum* of the Romans.[2] Dr. Reid remarks that the word καθῆκον (*officium*) extended both to the *honestum* and the *utile*, and comprehended every action performed either from a sense of duty, or from an enlightened regard to our true interest. In English we use the word *reasonable* with the same latitude, and indeed almost exactly in the same sense in which Cicero defines *officium*: "Id quod cur factum sit ratio probabilis reddi potest." In treating of such *offices*, Cicero, and Panætius before him, first points out those that are recommended to us by our love of the *honestum*, and next those that are recommended by our regard to the *utile*.

This distinction between a sense of duty and a regard to interest is acknowledged even by men whose moral principles are not the purest, nor the most consistent. What unlimited confidence do we repose in the conduct of one whom we know to be

l'accomplissement de nos devoirs,' et que je regarde l'amour éclairé de nous mêmes comme le principe de tout sacrifice morale."—*Œuvres Posthumes du Roi de Prusse*, Tom. XIV. p. 99

[1] *De Officiis*, Lib. I. cap. iv.

[2] Reid's *Essays on the Active Powers*. Essay III. [Part iii. chap. 5.—*Works*, p. 588.]

a man of honour, even in those cases in which he acts out of the view of the world, and where the strongest temptations of worldly interest concur to lead him astray! We know that his heart would revolt at the idea of anything base or unworthy. Dr. Reid observes, that what we call *honour*, considered as a principle of conduct, "is only another name for a regard to duty, to rectitude, to propriety of conduct."[1] This, I think, is going rather too far; for, although the two principles coincide *in general* in the direction they give to our conduct, they do not coincide always; the principle of *honour* being liable, from its nature and origin, to be most unhappily perverted in its applications by a bad education and the influence of fashion. At the same time, Dr. Reid's remark is perfectly in point, for the principle of honour is plainly grafted on a sense of duty, and necessarily presupposes its existence.

Dr. Paley, one of the most zealous advocates for the selfish system of morals, admits the fact on which the foregoing argument proceeds, but endeavours to evade the conclusion by means of a theory so extraordinary, that I shall state it in his own words. "There is always understood to be a difference between an act of *prudence* and an act of *duty*. Thus, if I distrusted a man who owed me a sum of money, I should reckon it an act of prudence to get another person bound with him; but I should hardly call it an act of duty. On the other hand, it would be thought a very unusual and loose kind of language to say, that, as I had made such a promise, it was *prudent* to perform it; or, that, as my friend, when he went abroad, placed a box of jewels in my hands, it was *prudent* in me to preserve it for him till he returned.

"Now, in what, you will ask, does the difference consist, inasmuch as, according to our account of the matter, both in the one case and the other, in acts of duty as well as acts of prudence, we consider solely what we ourselves shall gain or lose by the act?

"The difference, and the only difference, is this, that, in the one case, we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present

[1] *Essays on the Active Powers*, [Essay III. Part iii. chap. 5.—*Works*, p. 587.]

world; in the other case, we consider also what we shall lose or gain in the world to come.*

On this curious passage I have no comment to offer. A sufficient answer to it may, I trust, be derived from the following reasonings. In the meantime, it will be allowed to be at least one presumption of an essential distinction between the notions of duty and of interest, that there are different words to express these notions in all languages, and that the most illiterate of mankind are in no danger of confounding them together.

(2.) But, secondly, the emotions arising from the contemplation of what is right and wrong in conduct are different both in degree and in kind from those which are produced by a calm regard to our own happiness. Of this, I think, nobody can doubt, who considers with attention the operation of our moral principles in cases where their effects are not counteracted or modified by a combination with some other principles of our nature. In judging, for example, of *our own* conduct, our moral powers are warped by the influence of self-partiality and self-deceit; and, accordingly, we daily see men commit, without any remorse, actions, which, if performed by another person, they would have regarded with the liveliest sentiments of indignation and abhorrence. Even in *this last case* the experiment is not always perfectly fair; for where the actor has been previously known to us our judgment is generally affected, in a greater or less degree, by our prepossessions or by our prejudices. In contemplating the characters exhibited in histories and in novels, the emotions we feel are the immediate and the genuine result of our moral constitution; and although they may be stronger in some men than in others, yet they are in all distinctly perceivable, even in those whose want of temper and of candour render them scarcely conscious of the distinction of right and wrong in the conduct of their neighbours and acquaintance. And hence probably (we may observe by the way) the chief origin of the pleasure we experience in this sort of reading. The representations of *the stage*, however, afford the

* [*Moral and Political Philosophy*, Book II. chap. iii.]

most favourable of all opportunities for studying the moral constitution of man. As the mind is here perfectly indifferent to the parties whose character and conduct are the subject of the fable, the judgments it forms can hardly fail to be impartial, and the feelings arising from these judgments are much more conspicuous in their external effects than if the play were perused in the closet; for every species of enthusiasm operates more forcibly when men are collected in a crowd. On such an occasion the slightest hint suggested by the poet raises to transport the passions of the audience, and forces involuntary tears from men of the greatest reserve and the most correct sense of propriety. The crowd does not *create* the feeling nor even *alter its nature*, it only enables us to remark its operation *on a greater scale*. In these cases we have surely no time for reflection; and indeed the emotions of which we are conscious are such as no speculations about our own interest could possibly excite. It is in situations of this kind that we most completely forget ourselves as individuals, and feel the most sensibly the existence of those moral ties by which Heaven has been pleased to bind mankind together.

(3.) Although philosophers have shown that a sense of duty, and an enlightened regard to our own happiness, conspire in most instances to give the same direction to our conduct, so as to put it beyond a doubt that, even in this world, a virtuous life is true wisdom, yet this is a truth by no means obvious to the common sense of mankind, but deduced from an extensive view of human affairs, and an accurate investigation of the *remote consequences* of our different actions. It is from experience and reflection, therefore, we learn the connexion between virtue and happiness; and, consequently, the great lessons of morality which are obvious to the capacity of all mankind could never have been suggested to them merely by a regard to their own interest. Indeed, this discovery which experience makes to us of the connexion between virtue and happiness, both in the case of individuals and of political societies, furnishes one of the most pleasing subjects of speculation to the philosopher, as it places in a striking point of view the unity of design which

takes place in our constitution, and opens encouraging and delightful prospects with respect to the moral government of the Deity.

It is a just and beautiful observation of Dr. Reid, that "although wise men have concluded that virtue is the only road to happiness, this conclusion is founded chiefly upon the natural respect men have for virtue, and the good and happiness that is intrinsic to it, and arises from the love of it. If we suppose a man altogether destitute of this principle, who considered virtue as only the means to another end, there is no reason to think that he would ever take it to be the road to happiness, but would wander for ever seeking this object where it is not to be found."*

This observation leads me to remark farther, that the man who is most successful in the pursuit of happiness, is not he who proposes it to himself as the great object of his pursuit. To do so, and to be continually occupied with schemes on the subject, would fill the mind with anxious conjectures about futurity, and with perplexing calculations of the various chances of good and evil. Whereas the man whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty, conducts himself in the business of life with boldness, consistency and dignity, and finds himself rewarded with that happiness which so often eludes the pursuit of those who exert every faculty of the mind in order to attain it.

Something very similar to this takes place with regard to nations. From the earliest accounts of mankind, politicians have been employed in devising schemes of national aggrandizement, and have proceeded on the supposition, that the prosperity of their own country could only be advanced by depressing all others around them. It has now been shown with irresistible evidence, that those views were founded on mistake, and that the prosperity of a country is intimately connected with that of its neighbours; insomuch that the enlightened statesman, instead of embarrassing himself with the care of a machine whose parts were become too complicated for any

* [*On the Active Powers*, Essay III. Part iii. chap. 4.—*Works* p. 586.]

human comprehension, finds his labour reduced to the simple business of observing the rules of justice and humanity. It is remarkable, that, long before the date of these profound speculations in politics, for which we are indebted to Mr. Smith and to the French economists, Fenelon was led merely by the goodness of his heart, and by his speculative conviction of the intimate connexion between virtue and happiness under the moral government of God, to recommend a free trade as an expedient measure in policy, and to reprobate the mean ideas of national jealousy as calculated to frustrate the very ends to which they are supposed to be subservient. Indeed I am inclined to think, that, as in conducting the affairs of private life, "the integrity of the upright man" is his surest guide, so in managing the affairs of a great empire, a strong sense of justice, and an ardent zeal for the rights and for the happiness of mankind, will go farther to form a great and successful statesman, than the most perfect acquaintance with political details, unassisted by the direction of these inward monitors.

An author, too, in our own country, of sound judgment, and of very accurate commercial information, and who was one of the first in England who turned the attention of the public to those liberal notions concerning trade which are now become so prevalent, acknowledges that it was by a train of reasoning *a priori* that he was led to his conclusions. "Can we suppose," says he, "that Divine Providence has really constituted the order of things in such a sort, as to make the rule of natural self-preservation inconsistent with the fundamental principle of universal benevolence, and the doing as we would be done by? For my own part, I must confess, I never could conceive that an all-wise, just, and benevolent being would contrive one part of his plan to be so contradictory to the other as here supposed, —that is, would lay us under one obligation as to morals, and another as to trade; or, in short, to make that to be our duty which is not, upon the whole, and generally speaking, (even without the consideration of a future state,) our interest likewise.

"Therefore I *concluded a priori*, that there must be some flaw or other in the preceding arguments, plausible as they seem, and great as they are on the foot of human authority. For though the appearance of things at first sight makes for this conclusion, 'that poor countries must inevitably carry away the trade from rich ones, and consequently impoverish them, the fact itself cannot be so."[1]

(4.) The same conclusion is strongly confirmed by *the early period of life* at which our moral judgments make their appearance, long before children are able to form *the general notion of happiness*, and, indeed, in the very infancy of their reason. It is astonishing how powerfully a child of sensibility may be affected by any simple narration calculated to rouse the feelings of pity, of generosity, or of indignation, and how very early some minds formed in a happy mould are inspired with a consciousness of the dignity of their nature, and glow with the enthusiasm of virtue. Dr. Beattie has beautifully painted these openings of the moral character in the description he gives of the effect produced on his young Edwin by the fine old ballad of the *Babes in the Wood.*

" But when to horror his amazement rose,
A gentler strain the beldame would rehearse,
A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan babes and guardian uncle fierce.
Oh cruel! will no pang of pity pierce
That heart by lust of lucre sear'd to stone?
For sure if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those helpless orphan babes by thy fell arts undone.

" See where with berries smear'd, with brambles torn,
The babes now famish'd lay them down to die;
'Midst the wild howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie,
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry,
' For from the town the man returns no more.'
But thou who Heaven's just vengeance dar'st defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.

[1] Dean Tucker's *Tracts on Political and Commercial Subjects.*

" A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy
Brighten'd one moment Edwin's starting tear;
—' But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
And innocence thus die by doom severe?'—
Oh! Edwin, while thy heart is yet sincere,
The assaults of discontent and doubt repel;
Dark even at noon-tide is our mortal sphere,
But let us hope—to doubt is to rebel,—
Let us exult in hope that all shall yet be well." *

The reasonings already stated seem to me to furnish a sufficient refutation of the selfish theory of morals, as it is explained by the greater number of the philosophers who have adopted it; but, before leaving the subject, it is necessary for me to take notice of a doctrine fundamentally the same, though modified in such a manner as to elude *some* of the foregoing arguments,—a doctrine which has been maintained of late by various English writers of note, and which I suspect is at present the prevailing system in that part of the island. According to this doctrine we do, indeed, in many cases approve or disapprove of particular actions without any reference to our own interest *at the time;* but it is asserted that it was views of self-interest which originally created these moral sentiments, and led us to *associate* agreeable or disagreeable emotions with human conduct. The origin of the moral faculty, in the opinion of these theorists, is precisely analogous to that of *avarice*, or of any of our other factitious principles of action. Money, it will not be disputed, is *at first* desired merely on account of its subservience to the gratification of our natural desires; but, in process of time, the association of ideas leads us to regard it as a desirable thing in itself, without any reference to this subservience or utility, and in many cases it continues to be coveted with an increasing passion, long after we have lost all relish for the enjoyments it enables us to purchase. In the same manner, a particular action which was at first approved or disapproved of, merely on account of its supposed tendency with respect to our own interest, comes, in process of time, to be approved or disapproved of the moment it is mentioned, and without any

* [*Minstrel*, Book I. stanza xlv.]

reflection on our part that we are able to recollect. Thus, without abandoning the old selfish principles, they contrive to evade the force of the arguments founded by Hutcheson and others on the instantaneousness with which our moral judgments are commonly pronounced. This, if I am not mistaken, is the theory of Dr. Law, of Dr. Hartley, of Dr. Priestley, of Dr. Paley, and of Dr. Paley's great oracle in philosophy, the author of the *Light of Nature Pursued*, [Abraham Tucker.]

I am ready to acknowledge that this refinement on the old selfish system gives it a degree of plausibility which it did not originally possess, and obviates *one* of the objections to it formerly stated. But it must be remembered that this was not the *only* objection, and that there are several others which apply both to the old and new hypothesis with equal force.

Among these arguments, what I would lay the principal stress on is the degree of experience and reflection necessary for discovering the *tendency* of virtue to promote our happiness, compared with the very early period of life when the moral sentiments display themselves in their full vigour.

In answer to this, it may perhaps be alleged, that when once moral ideas have been formed by the process already described, they are caught by infants from their parents or preceptors by a sort of imitation, and without any reflection on their part. "There is nothing," says Dr. Paley, "which children imitate, or apply more readily, than expressions of affection or aversion, of approbation, hatred, resentment, and the like; and when these passions and expressions are once connected, (which they will soon be by the same association which unites words with their ideas,) the passion will follow the expression, and attach upon the object to which the child has been accustomed to apply the epithet. In a word, when almost everything else is learned by *imitation*, can we wonder to find the same cause concerned in the generation of our moral sentiments?"*

The plausibility of this reasoning arises entirely from the address with which the author introduces *indirectly* a most important fact with respect to the human mind; a fact which,

* [*Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, Book I. chap. v.]

by engrossing the attention of the reader, is apt to prevent his perceiving, on a superficial view, its inapplicability to the point in dispute, or at least its insufficiency to establish in its full extent the conclusion which is deduced from it. That imitation and the association of ideas have a great influence on our moral judgments and emotions, more particularly in our early years, every man must be sensible who has reflected at all on the subject; and it is a fact which deserves the serious consideration of all who have any concern in the education of youth. But does it therefore follow that imitation and the association of ideas are sufficient to account for *the origin* of the power of moral perception, and for *the origin* of our notions of right and wrong? On the contrary, the tendency we have in the infancy of our reason to follow in our moral judgments the example of those whom we love and reverence; the influence of association sometimes in guiding, and sometimes in misleading us in what we praise or blame, *presuppose* the existence of the power of moral judgment, and of the general notions of right and wrong. The power of these adventitious causes over the mind is so great, that there is perhaps no *particular* practice which we may not be trained to approve of or to condemn; but wherever this happens, the operation of these causes supposes us to be already in possession of some faculty by which we are capable of bestowing approbation or blame. It is worthy too of remark, that it is only with respect to *particular* practices that education is capable of misleading us; for even when education perverts the judgment, it produces its effect by employing the instrumentality of our moral principles. In many cases it will be found that it operates by combining *a number* of principles against *one;* by associating, for example, a number of worthy dispositions and amiable affections with habits which, if divested of such an alliance, would be regarded as mean and contemptible.

To all this we may add, that our speculative judgments concerning *truth* and *falsehood*, as well as our judgments concerning *right* and *wrong*, are liable to be influenced by imitation and the association of ideas. Even in mathematics, when a pupil of a

tender age enters first on the study of the elements, his judgment leans not a little on that of his teacher, and he feels his confidence in the truth of his conclusions sensibly confirmed by his faith in the superior understanding of those whom he looks up to with respect. It is only by degrees that he emancipates himself from this dependence, and comes at last to perceive the irresistible force of demonstrative evidence; and yet it will not be inferred from this that the power of reasoning is the result of imitation or of habit. The conclusion mentioned above with respect to the power of moral judgment is equally erroneous.

The looseness and sophistry of Paley's reasonings on the subject of the moral faculty may be traced to the vague and indistinct conception he had formed of the point in question. In proof of this I shall transcribe his own words from his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy.* It is necessary to premise, that he introduces his argument against the existence of a moral sense by quoting a story from Valerius Maximus, which I shall present to my readers in Dr. Paley's version.

"The father of Caius Toranius had been proscribed by the triumvirate. Caius Toranius coming over to the interests of that party, discovered to the officers who were in pursuit of his father's life, the place where he concealed himself, and gave them withal a description by which they might distinguish his person when they found him. The old man, more anxious for the safety and fortunes of his son, than about the little that might remain of his own life, began immediately to inquire of the officers who seized him, whether his son was well? whether he had done his duty to the satisfaction of his generals? That son, replied one of the officers, so dear to thy affections, betrayed thee to us; by his information thou art apprehended and diest. The officer with this struck a poignard to his heart, and the unhappy parent fell, not so much affected by his fate, as by the means to which he owed it."

"Now," says Dr. Paley, "the question is, Whether, if this story were related to the wild boy caught some years ago in the woods of Hanover, or to a savage without experience and without instruction, cut off in his infancy from all intercourse with

his species, and consequently under no possible influence of example, authority, education, sympathy or habit, whether, I say, such a one would feel, upon the relation, any degree of that *sentiment of disapprobation of Toranius's conduct* which we feel, or not?

"They who maintain the existence of a moral sense, of innate maxims, of a natural conscience, that the love of virtue and hatred of vice are instinctive, or the perception of right and wrong intuitive, (all of which are only different ways of expressing the same opinion,) affirm that he would.

"They who deny the existence of a moral sense, &c., affirm that he would not.

"And upon this issue is joined."[1]

To those who are at all acquainted with the history of this dispute, it must appear evident that the question is here completely misstated; and that in the whole of Dr. Paley's subsequent argument on the subject, he combats a phantom of his own imagination. The opinion which he ascribes to his antagonists has been loudly and repeatedly disavowed by all the most eminent moralists who have disputed Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles;* and is indeed so very obviously absurd, that it never could have been for a moment entertained by any person in his senses.

Did it ever enter into the mind of the wildest theorist to imagine that the sense of seeing would enable a man, brought up from the moment of his birth in utter darkness, to form a conception of light and colours? But would it not be equally rash to conclude, from the extravagance of such a supposition, that the sense of seeing is not an original part of the human frame?

The above quotation from Paley forces me to remark farther, that, in combating the supposition of a *moral sense*, he has confounded together, as *only different ways of expressing the same opinion*, a variety of systems, which are regarded by all our best philosophers, not only as essentially distinct, but as in some measure opposed to each other. The system of Hutche-

[1] Book I. chap. v.

son, for example, is identified with that of Cudworth, to which (as will afterwards appear) it stands in direct opposition. But although, in this instance, the author's logical discrimination does not appear to much advantage, the sweeping censure thus bestowed on so many of our most celebrated ethical theories, has the merit of throwing a very strong light on that particular view of the subject which it is the aim of his reasonings to establish in contradiction to them all.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—EXAMINATION OF SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE FOREGOING CONCLUSIONS.

In the preceding observations I have endeavoured to prove that the moral faculty is an original principle of our constitution, which is not resolvable into any other principle or principles more general than itself; in particular, that it is not resolvable into self-love, or a prudential regard to our own interest. In order, however, completely to establish the existence of the moral faculty as an essential and universal part of human nature, it is necessary to examine with attention the objections which have been stated to this conclusion by some writers, who were either anxious to display their ingenuity by accounting in a different manner for the origin of our moral ideas, or who wish to favour the cause of scepticism by explaining away the reality and immutability of moral distinctions.

Among these objections, that which merits the most careful consideration, from the characters of those by whom it is maintained, is founded on the possibility of explaining the fact without increasing the number of original principles in our constitution. The rules of morality, it has been supposed, were, in the first instance, brought to light by the sagacity of philosophers and politicians; and it is only in consequence of the influence of education that they appear to form an original part of the human frame. The diversity of opinions among different nations with respect to the morality of particular actions has been considered as a strong confirmation of this doctrine.

But the power of education, although great, is confined within certain limits. It is indeed much more extensive than philoso-

phers once believed, as sufficiently appears from those modern discoveries, with respect to the distant parts of the globe, which have so wonderfully enlarged our knowledge of human nature, and which show clearly that many sentiments and opinions, which had been formerly regarded as inseparable from the nature of man, are the results of accidental situation. If our forefathers, however, went into one extreme on this point, we seem to be at present in no small danger of going into the opposite one, by considering man as entirely a factitious being, that may be moulded into any form by education and fashion.

I have said that the power of education is confined within certain limits. The reason is obvious, for it is by co-operating with the natural principles of the mind that education produces its effects. Nay, this very susceptibility of education, which is acknowledged to belong universally to the race, presupposes the existence of certain principles which are common to all mankind.

The influence of education in diversifying the appearances which the moral constitution of man exhibits in different instances, depends chiefly on that law of our constitution which was formerly called the Association of ideas; and this law supposes, in every case, that there are opinions and feelings essential to the human frame, by a combination with which external circumstances lay hold of the mind, and adapt it to its accidental situation. What we daily see happen in the trifling article of dress may help us to conceive how the Association of ideas operates in matters of more serious consequence. Fashion, it is well known, can reconcile us, in the course of a few weeks, to the most absurd and fantastical ornament; but does it follow from this that fashion could create our ideas of beauty and elegance? During the time we have seen this ornament worn, it has been confined, in a great measure, to those whom we consider as models of taste, and has been gradually associated with the impressions produced by the real elegance of their appearance and manner. When it pleases by itself, the effect is not to be ascribed to the thing considered abstractedly, nor to any change which our general notions of beauty have undergone, but to the impressions with which it has been generally

connected, and which it naturally recalls to the mind. The case is nearly the same with our moral sentiments. A man of splendid virtues attracts some esteem also to his imperfections, and, if placed in a conspicuous situation, may corrupt the moral sentiments of the multitude in the same manner in which he may introduce an absurd or fantastical ornament by his whimsical taste in the articles of dress. The commanding influence of Cato's virtues seems to have produced somewhat of this effect on the minds of some of his admirers. He was accused, we are told, of intemperance in wine; nor do his apologists pretend altogether to deny the charge. "But," says one of them, "it would be much easier to prove that intemperance is a decent and respectable quality, than that Cato could be guilty of any vice." "Catoni ebrietas objecta est; et facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit, hoc crimen honestum, quam turpem Catonem."*

In general it may be remarked, that, as education may vary in particular cases the opinions of individuals with respect to the objects of taste, without being able to create our notions of beauty or deformity, of grandeur or meanness, so education may vary our sentiments with respect to particular actions, but could not create our notions of right and wrong, of merit and demerit.[1]

With respect to the historical facts which have been quoted as proofs that the moral judgments of mankind are entirely factitious, we may venture to assert in general, that none of them justify so very extravagant a conclusion; that a great part of them are the effects of misrepresentation; and that others lead to a conclusion directly the reverse of what has been drawn from them. It would hardly be necessary, in the present times, to examine them seriously, were it not for the

* [Seneca, *De Tranquillitate*, c. xv.]

[1] It is observed by Condorcet in his *Eloge* of Euler, "*That, if we except the common maxims of morality*, there is no one truth which can boast of having been so generally adopted, or through such a succession of ages, as certain ridiculous and pernicious errors." The assertion, although not without some foundation in fact, is manifestly expressed by this author in terms too strong and unqualified. I quote it here chiefly on account of the remarkable concession which it involves in favour of *the fundamental principles of morality*;—a subject on which it has been generally alleged by sceptical writers, that our opinions are more liable, than on most others, to be warped by the influence of education and fashion.

authority which, in the opinion of many, they still continue to derive from the sanction of Mr. Locke.

"Have there not been whole nations," says this eminent philosopher, "and those of the most civilized people, among whom the exposing their children, and leaving them in the fields to perish, by want or wild beasts, has been the practice, as little condemned or scrupled as the begetting them? Do they not still in some countries put them into the same graves with their mothers if they die in child-birth, or despatch them if a pretended astrologer declares them to have unhappy stars? And are there not places where, at a certain age, they kill or expose their *parents* without any remorse at all? . . . . Where, then, are our innate ideas of justice, piety, gratitude; or where is that universal consent that assures us there are such inbred rules?"*

To this question of Locke's, so satisfactory an answer has been given by various writers, that it would be superfluous to enlarge on the subject here. It is sufficient to refer, *on the origin of infanticide*, to Mr. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*;† and, *on the alleged impiety among some rude tribes of children towards their parents*, to Charron *Sur la Sagesse*,[1] and to an excellent note of Dr. Beattie's in his *Essay on Fable and Romance*.‡ The reasonings of the two last writers are strongly confirmed by Mr. Ellis in his *Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage*, and by Mr. Curtis, (afterwards Sir Roger Curtis,) in a paper containing *some particulars with respect to the country of Labradore*, published in the *Philosophical Transactions* for the year 1773.

* [*Essay*, Book I. ch. iii. § 9.—There are a series of curious dissertations by an anonymous author among the Pythagorean Fragments, collected by Gale, which carry out with great ingenuity and minuteness a doctrine correspondent to Locke's, in regard to the nature of *moral distinctions*. They are, of course, written in the Doric dialect. See the *Opuscula Mythologica Physica et Ethica*. Amstel. 1688, p. 704-731.—*Ed.*]

† [Part v. chap. ii.]

[1] Liv. II. chap. viii. Charron's argument is evidently pointed at certain passages in Montaigne's *Essays*, in which that ingenious writer has fallen into a train of thought very similar to that which is the ground-work of Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles*.

‡ [*Dissertations, Moral and Critical*, p. 524, 4to ed.—if there be any other.]

In order to form a competent judgment on facts of this nature, it is necessary to attend to a variety of considerations which have been too frequently overlooked by philosophers; and, in particular, to make proper allowances for the three following:—I. For the different situations in which mankind are placed, partly by the diversity in their physical circumstances, and partly by the unequal degrees of civilisation which they have attained. II. For the diversity of their speculative opinions, arising from their unequal measures of knowledge or of capacity; and, III. For the different moral import of the same action under different systems of external behaviour.

I. (i.) In a part of the globe, where the soil and climate are so favourable as to yield all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life, with little or no labour on the part of man, it may reasonably be expected that the ideas of men will be more loose concerning *the rights of property* than where nature has been less liberal in her gifts. As the right of property is founded, *in the first instance*, on the natural sentiment, that *the labourer is entitled to the fruits of his own labour*, it is not surprising that, where little or no labour is required for the gratification of our desires, theft should be regarded as a very venial offence. There is here no contradiction in the moral judgments of mankind. Men feel *there*, with respect to those articles which we appropriate with the most anxious care, as we, in this part of the world, feel with respect to *air*, *light*, and *water*. If a country could be found in which no injustice was apprehended in depriving an individual of an enjoyment which he had provided for himself by a long course of persevering industry, the fact would be something to the purpose. But *this*, we may venture to say, has not yet been found to be the case in any quarter of the globe. That the circumstance I mentioned is the true explanation of the prevalence of theft in the South Sea Islands, and of the venial light in which it is there regarded, appears plainly from the accounts of our most intelligent navigators.

"There was another circumstance," says Captain Cook,

speaking of the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, "in which the people perfectly resembled the other islanders we had visited. At first on their entering the ship, they endeavoured to steal everything they came near, or *rather to take it openly, as what we either should not resent, or not hinder.*" (January 1778.)

In another place, talking of the same people:—"These islanders," says he, "merited our best commendations in their commercial intercourse, never once attempting to cheat us either ashore or alongside the ships. Some of them, indeed, as already mentioned, *at first* betrayed a thievish disposition; or rather, they thought that they had *a right* to everything they could lay their hands on; but they soon laid aside a conduct which, we convinced them, they could not persevere in with impunity."

In another part of the voyage, (April 1778,) in which he gives an account of the American Indians near King George's Sound, he contrasts their notions on the subject of theft with those of the South Sea Islanders. "The inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, rather than be idle, would steal anything they could lay their hands on, without ever considering whether it could be of use to them or no. The novelty of the object was with them a sufficient motive for endeavouring, by any indirect means, to get possession of it; which marked, that in such cases they were rather actuated by a childish curiosity than by a dishonest disposition, *regardless of the modes of supplying real wants.* The inhabitants of Nootka, who invaded our property, have not such an apology. They were *thieves* in the strictest sense of the word; for they pilfered nothing from us but what they knew could be converted to the purposes of private utility, and had a *real value*, according to their estimation of things." He adds, that "he had abundant proof that stealing is much practised among themselves;"—but it is evident, from the manner in which he expresses himself, that *theft* was not *here* considered in the same venial or indifferent light as in those parts of the globe where the bounty of nature deprives exclusive property of almost all its value.[1]

[1] [Cook's *Voyages*, &c., of the dates specified.] See also Anderson's *Remarks*, February 1777, and December 1777.

In general it will be found, that the ideas of rude nations on the subject of *property* are precise and decided, in proportion to *the degree of labour* to which they have been habituated in procuring the means of subsistence. Of one barbarous people, (the Greenlanders,) we are expressly told by a very authentic writer, (Crantz,) that their regard to property acquired by labour is not only strict, but approaches to superstition. "Not one of them," says he, "will appropriate to himself a sea-dog in which he finds one or more harpoons with untorn thongs; nor even carry away drift-wood, or other things thrown up by the sea, *if they are covered with a stone*, because they consider this as an indication that they have already been appropriated by some other person."[1]

I. (ii.) Another very remarkable instance of an apparent diversity in the moral judgments of mankind occurs in the contradictory opinions entertained by different ages and nations on the moral lawfulness of exacting *interest* for the use of money. Aristotle, in the first book of his *Politics*, (6th chapter,) speaking of the various ways of getting money, considers agriculture and the rearing of cattle as honourable and natural, because the earth itself, and all animals, are by nature fruitful; "but to make money from money, which is barren and unfruitful," he pronounces "to be the worst of all modes of accumulation, and the utmost corruption of artificial degeneracy. By commerce," he observes, "money is perverted from the purpose of exchange to that of gain. Still, however, this gain is obtained

[1] The following passage of Voltaire is perhaps liable to the charge of over-refinement; but it sufficiently shows that he saw clearly the general principle on which the lax opinions of some nations on the subject of theft are to be explained.

"On a beau nous dire, qu'à Lacedémone, le larcin étoit ordonné; ce n'est là qu'un abus des mots. La même chose que nous appelons *larcin*, n'étoit point commandée à Lacedémone; mais dans une ville, où tout étoit en commun, la permission qu'on donnoit de prendre habilement ce que des particuliers s'approprioient contre la loi, étoit une manière de punir l'esprit de propriété défendu chez ces peuples. *Le tien et le mien* étoit un crime, dont ce que nous appelons *larcin* étoit la punition."—(Voltaire's *Account of Newton's Discoveries.*) Some of his other remarks on Locke are very curious.

by the mutual transfer of different objects; but usury, by transferring merely the same object from one hand to another, generates money from money; and the interest thus generated is therefore called 'offspring,' as being precisely of the same nature, and of the same specific substance with that from which it proceeds."[1]—Similar sentiments with respect to *usury* (under which title was comprehended every *premium*, great or small, which was received by way of interest) occur in the Roman writers. "Concerning the arts," says Cicero, in his first book *De Officiis*, "and the means of acquiring wealth, which are to be accounted liberal, and which mean, the following are the sentiments usually entertained. In the first place, those means of gain are in the *least* credit which incur the hatred of mankind, as those of tax-gatherers and usurers."* The same author (in the second book of the same work) mentions an anecdote of old Cato, who, being asked, "What he thought of lending money upon interest?" answered, "What do you think of the crime of murder?"†

In the code of the Jewish legislator, the regulations concerning loans imply manifestly, that to exact a *premium* for the thing lent was an act of unkindness unsuitable to the fraternal relation in which the Israelites stood to one another. "Thou shalt not lend," it is said, "upon usury to thy brother: usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent."—

[1] Gillies's Translation. The argument of Aristotle is so extremely absurd and puerile, that it could never have led this most acute and profound philosopher to the conclusion it is employed to support, but may be justly numbered among the instances in which speculative men have exerted their ingenuity to defend, by sophistical reasonings, the established prejudices of the times in which they lived, and in which the supposed evidence of the inference has served, in their estimation, to compensate for the weakness of the premises. It is, however, worthy of remark, that the argument, such as it is, was manifestly suggested by the etymology of the word τόκος, (interest,) from the verb τίκτω, *pario*; an etymology which seems to imply, that the principal generates the interest. The same idea, too, occurs in the scene between Antonio and Shylock, in the *Merchant of Venice*:—

"If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friend, (for when did friendship take
A breed of barren metal from his friend?)
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou may'st with better face
Exact the penalty."

* [Cap. xlii.]

† [Cap. xxv.]

"Unto the stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thy hand to, in the land whither thou goest to possess it."*

In consequence of this prohibition in the Mosaic law, the primitive Christians, conceiving that they ought to look on all men, both Jews and Gentiles, as *brethren*, inferred, (partly perhaps from the prohibition given by Moses, and partly from the general prejudices then prevalent against usury,) that it was against the Christian law to take interest from any man. And, accordingly, there is no crime against which the fathers in their homilies declaim with more vehemence. The same abhorrence of usury of every kind appears in the canon law, insomuch that the penalty by that law is excommunication; nor is the usurer allowed burial until he has made restitution of what he got by usury, or security is given that restitution shall be made after his death. About the middle of the seventeenth century, we find the divines of the Church of England very often preaching against all interest for the use of money, even that which the law allowed, as a gross immorality. And not much earlier it was the general opinion both of divines and lawyers, that, although law permitted a certain rate of interest to prevent greater evils, and in compliance with the general corruption of men, (as the law of Moses permitted polygamy, and authorized divorce for slight causes among the Jews,) yet that the rules of morality did not sanction the taking *any interest* for money, at least that it was a very doubtful point whether they did. The same opinion was maintained in the English House of Commons by some of the members who were lawyers, in the debate upon a bill brought in not much more than a hundred years ago.

I need not remark how completely the sentiments of mankind are now changed upon the subject; insomuch that a moralist or divine would expose himself to ridicule if he should seriously think it worth his while to use arguments to prove the lawfulness of a practice which was formerly held in universal

* [*Deuteronomy* xxiii. 19, 20.]

abhorrence. The consistency of this practice, (in cases where the debtor is able to pay the interest,) with the strictest morality, appears to us so manifest and indisputable, that it would be thought equally absurd to argue for it as against it.[1]

The diversity of judgments, however, on this particular question, instead of proving a diversity in the *moral* judgments of mankind, affords an illustration of the uniformity of their opinions concerning the fundamental rules of moral duty.

In a state where there is little or no commerce, the great motive for borrowing being necessity, the value of a loan cannot be ascertained by calculation as it *may* be where money is borrowed for the purposes of trade. In such circumstances, therefore, every money-lender who accepts of interest will be regarded in the same odious light in which pawnbrokers are considered among *us;* and "the man who putteth out his coin to usury," will naturally be classed (as he is in the words of Scripture) "with him who taketh a reward against the guiltless."*

These considerations, while they account for the origin of the opinions concerning the practice of taking interest for money among those nations of antiquity whose commercial transactions were few and insignificant, will be sufficient, at the same time, to establish its reasonableness and equity in countries where money is most commonly borrowed for the purposes of commercial profit, and where, of consequence, the use of it has a fixed and determinate value depending (like that of any

[1] A learned gentleman, indeed, of the Middle Temple, Mr. Plowden, (a lawyer, I believe, of the Roman Catholic persuasion,) who published, about thirty years ago, a Treatise upon the *Law of Usury and Annuities*, has employed no less than fifty-nine pages of his work in considering the law of usury in a *spiritual view*, in order to establish the following conclusion, "That it is not sinful, but lawful for a British subject to receive legal interest for the money he may lend, whether he receive it in annual dividends from the public, or in interest from private individuals who may have borrowed it upon mortgage, bond, or otherwise."—Mr. Necker, too, in the notes annexed to his *Eloge on Colbert*, thought it necessary for him to offer an apology to the Church of Rome for the freedom with which he ventured to write upon this critical subject. "Ce que je dis de l'intérêt est sous un point de vue politique, et n'a point de rapport avec les respectables maximes de la religion sur ce point."

* [See *Psalm* xv. 5.]

commodity in general request) on the circumstances of the market at the time. In such countries *both* parties are benefited by the transaction, and even the state is a gainer in the end. The *lenders* of money are frequently widows and orphans who subsist on the interest of their slender funds, while the *borrowers* as frequently belong to the most opulent class of the community, who wish to enlarge their capital and extend their trade; and who, by doing so, are enabled to give farther encouragement to industry, and to supply labour and bread to the indigent.

The prejudices, therefore, against usury among the ancient philosophers, were the natural result of the state of society which fell under their observation. The prohibition of usury among the Jews in their own mutual transactions, while they were permitted to take a *premium* for the money which they lent to strangers, was in perfect consistency with the other principles of their political code; commerce being interdicted as tending to an intercourse with idolaters, and mortgages prevented by the indefeasible right which every man had to his lands.

I. (iii.) I shall only mention one instance more to illustrate the effects of different states of society in modifying the moral judgments of mankind. It relates to the crime of assassination, which we now justly consider as the most dreadful of any; but which must necessarily have been viewed in a very different light when laws and magistrates were unknown, and when the only check on injustice was *the principle of resentment.* As it is the nature of this principle not only to seek the punishment of the delinquent, but to prompt the injured person to inflict the punishment with his own hand, so in every country the criminal jurisdiction of the magistrate has been the last branch of his authority that was established. Where the police, therefore, is weak, murders must not only be more frequent, but are really less criminal, than in a society like ours, where the private rights of individuals are completely protected by law, and where there hardly occurs an instance, excepting

in a case of self-defence, in which one man can be justified for shedding the blood of another. And, even when in a rude age a murder is committed from unjustifiable motives of self-interest or jealousy, yet the frequency of the occurrence prevents the minds of men from revolting so strongly at the sight of blood as we do at present. It is on this very principle that Mr. Mitford accounts for the manners and ideas that prevailed in the heroic ages of Greece.

But it is unnecessary, on this head, to appeal to the history of early times, or of distant nations. In our own country of Scotland, about two centuries ago, what shocking murders were perpetrated, and seemingly without remorse, by men who were by no means wholly destitute of a sense of religion and morality! Dr. Robertson* remarks, that "Buchanan relates the murder of Cardinal Beatoun and of Rizzio, without expressing those feelings which are natural to a man, or that indignation which became an historian. Knox, whose mind was fiercer and more unpolished, talks of the death of Beatoun and of the Duke of Guise, not only without censure, but with the utmost exultation. On the other hand, the Bishop of Ross mentions the assassination of the Earl of Murray with some degree of applause. Blackwood dwells on it with the most indecent triumph; and ascribes it directly to the hand of God. Lord Ruthven, the principal actor in the conspiracy against Rizzio, wrote an account of it some time before his own death; and in all his long narrative there is not one expression of regret, or one symptom of compunction, for a crime no less dishonourable than barbarous. Morton, equally guilty of the same crime, entertained the same sentiments concerning it; and in his last moments, neither he himself, nor the ministers who attended him, seem to have considered it as an action which called for repentance. Even then he talks of *David's slaughter* as coolly as if it had been an innocent or commendable deed."[1]

* [*History of Scotland.*]

[1] The following lines, in which Sir David Lindsay reprobates the murder of his contemporary and enemy, Cardinal Beatoun, deserve to be added to the instances quoted by Dr. Robertson, as

The reflections of Dr. Robertson on these assassinations, which were formerly so common in this country, are candid and judicious. "In consequence of the limited power of our princes, the administration of justice was extremely feeble and dilatory. An attempt to punish the crimes of a chieftain, or even of his vassals, often excited rebellions and civil wars. To nobles haughty and independent, among whom the causes of discord were many and unavoidable, who were quick in discerning an injury, and impatient to revenge it; who esteemed it infamous to submit to an enemy, and cowardly to forgive him; who considered the right of punishing those who had injured them as a privilege of their order, and a mark of independency; such slow proceedings were extremely unsatisfactory. The blood of their adversary was, in their opinion, the only thing that could wash away an affront. Where that was not shed, their revenge was disappointed; their courage became suspected, and a stain was left on their honour. That vengeance which the impotent hand of the magistrate could not inflict, their own could easily execute. Under a government so feeble, men assumed, as in a state of nature, the right of judging and redressing their own wrongs. And thus *assassination*, a crime of all others the most destructive to society, came not only to be allowed, but to be deemed honourable." In another passage he observes, "That mankind became thus habituated to blood, not only in times of war, but of peace; and from this, as well as other causes, contracted an amazing ferocity of temper and of manners."

II. The second cause I mentioned of the apparent diversity among mankind in their moral judgments, is the diversity in their speculative opinions.

The manner in which this cause operates will appear obvious

an illustration of the moral sentiments of our ancestors. They are expressed with a *naïveté* which places in a strong light both the moral and religious principles of that age.

"As for this Cardinal, I grant,
He was a man we well might want;
God will forgive it soon:
But of a sooth, the truth to say,
Altho' the loun be well away,
The fact was foully done."

if it be considered, that nature, by the suggestions of our moral principles, only recommends to us particular *ends*, but leaves it to our reason to ascertain the most effectual *means* by which these *ends* are to be attained. Thus nature points out to us our own happiness, and also the happiness of our fellow-creatures, as objects towards the attainment of which our best exertions ought to be directed; but she has left us to exercise our reason, both in ascertaining what the constituents of happiness are, and how they may be most completely secured. Hence, according to the different points of view in which these subjects of consideration may appear to different understandings, there must of necessity be a diversity of judgments with respect to the morality of the same actions. One man, for example, believes, that the happiness of society is most effectually consulted by an implicit obedience *in all cases* to the will of the civil magistrate. Another, that the mischief to be apprehended from resistance and insurrection in cases of urgent necessity are trifling when compared with those which may result to ourselves and our posterity from an established despotism. The former will of course be an advocate for the duty of passive obedience; the latter for the *right*, and in certain supposable cases for the *obligation* of resistance. Both of these men, however, agree in the general principle, that it is our duty to promote to the utmost of our power the happiness of society; and they differ from each other only on a speculative question of expediency.

In like manner there is a wide diversity between the moral systems of ancient and modern times on the subject of suicide. Both, however, agree in this, that it is the duty of man to obey the will of his Creator, and to consult every intimation of it that his reason can discover, as the supreme law of his conduct. They differed only in their *speculative opinions* concerning the interpretation of the will of God, as manifested by the dispensations of his providence in the events of human life. The prejudices of the ancients on this subject were indeed founded in a very partial and erroneous view of circumstances, (arising, however, not unnaturally from the unsettled state of society in

the ancient republics;) but they only afford an additional instance of the numerous mistakes to which human *reason* is liable; not of a fluctuation in the judgments of mankind concerning the fundamental rules of moral duty.

III. The different moral import too of the same material action, under different systems of external behaviour, deserves particular attention, in forming an estimate of the moral sentiments of different ages and nations.

This difference is chiefly owing to two causes:—First, to the different conceptions of happiness and misery,—of what is to be desired and shunned,—which men are led to form in different states of society. Secondly, to the effect of accident, which, as it leads men to speak different languages in different countries, so it leads them to express the same dispositions of the heart by different external observances.

III. (i.) Where the opinions of mankind vary concerning the external circumstances that constitute happiness, the external expressions of benevolence must vary of course. Thus, in the fact referred to by Locke concerning the Indians in the neighbourhood of Hudson's Bay, the wishes of the aged parent being different from what we are accustomed to observe in this part of the world, the marks of filial affection on the part of the child must vary also. "In some countries honour is associated with suffering, and it is reckoned a favour to be killed with circumstances of torture. Instances of this occur in the manners of some American nations, and in the pride which an Indian matron feels when placed on the funeral-pile of her deceased husband."[1] In such cases an action may have to us all the external marks of extreme cruelty, while it proceeded from a disposition generous and affectionate.

III. (ii.) A difference in the moral import of the same action often arises from the same accidental causes which lead men,

[1] See Dr. Ferguson's *Principles of Moral and Political Science*, Vol. II. p. 141. [Part II. chap. ii. sect. 4.]

in different parts of the globe, to express the same ideas by different arbitrary signs.

What happens in the trifling forms and ceremonies of behaviour may serve to illustrate the operation of the same causes on more important occasions. "In the general principles of urbanity, politeness, or civility, we may venture to assert, that the opinions of all nations are agreed; but in the expression of this disposition we meet with endless varieties. In Europe, it is the form of respect to uncover the *head;* in Japan, the corresponding form is said to be to uncover *the foot* by dropping the slipper.[1] Persons unacquainted with any language but their own are apt to think the words they use natural and fixed expressions of things; while the words of a different language they consider as mere jargon, or the result of caprice. In the same manner, forms of behaviour different from their own appear offensive and irrational, or a perverse substitution of absurd for reasonable manners.

"Among the varieties of this sort, we find actions, gestures, and forms of expression in their own nature indifferent, entered into the code of civil or religious duties, and enforced under the strongest sanctions of public censure or esteem; or under the strongest denunciations of the Divine indignation or favour.

"Numberless ceremonies and observances in the ritual of different sects are to be accounted for on the same principles which produce the diversity of names or signs for the same thing in the vocabulary of different languages. Thus, the generality of Christians when they pray take off their hats; the Jews when they pray put them on. Such acts, how strongly soever they may affect the imaginations of the multitude, may justly be considered as part of the arbitrary language of particular countries; implying no diversity whatever in the ideas or feelings of those among whom they are established."[2]

[1] "Even here," Sir Joshua Reynolds ingeniously remarks, "we may perhaps observe a general idea running through all the varieties; to wit, the general idea of making the body less in token of respect, whether by bowing the body, kneeling, prostration, pulling off the upper part of the dress, or throwing aside the lower."—[*Discourses.*]

[2] See Dr. Ferguson's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, Vol. II. pp. 142, 143. [Part II. chap. ii. sect. 4.]

As a farther proof of the impossibility of judging of the general character of a people from their opinions concerning the morality of *particular* actions, we may observe, that, in some of the writings of the ancient moralists, we meet with the most refined and sublime precepts blended promiscuously with dissuasives from the most shocking and detestable crimes; in one sentence, perhaps, a precept which may be read with advantage by the most enlightened of the present times; and in the next, a dissuasive from some crime which no one now could be supposed to perpetrate, who was not arrived at the last stage of depravity. The following quotations from the *ΠΟΙΗΜΑ ΝΟΥΘΕΤΙΚΟΝ*, ascribed to Phocyllides,[1] will sufficiently illustrate this remark. I shall transcribe them in a very literal Latin version, and would have endeavoured to bring them within the reach of a still wider circle of my readers by means of an English translation, if the simplicity of expression in the two learned languages had admitted of a literal version into our own tongue.

"Primum Deum cole, postea verò tuos parentes.
Omnibus justa tribue, neque judicium ad gratiam trahe.
Ne abjicias paupertatem, injuste ne judica personam:
Quod si tu male judicaveris, Deus te postea judicabit.
Mendico statim da, neque cras venire jube,
Exulem in domum excipe, et cæcum duc in viam.
Naufragorum miserere, quoniam navigatio incerta est.
Communis casus omnium; vita trochus; instabilis felicitas.
Sint in pari honore advenæ cum civibus;
Omnes enim paupertatem experimur vagam,
Regioque nullum stabile habet solum hominibus.
Qui volens injuste agit malus vir est; sed qui ex necessitate,
Non dico prorsus malum; sed institutum examina cujusque.
Infantulis tenellis ne violenter manum corripueris;
Neque mulier conceptum fœtum corrumpat in ventre,
Neque post partum canibus projiciat aut vulturibus lacerandum.
Neque ullus suæ conjugi gravidæ manum afferat."

[1] Phocyllides, a Greek poet and philosopher, flourished about 540 years before the Christian era. The poem, however, which passes under his name, is supposed to have been the work of some writer contemporary with Adrian or Trajan. But this does not render the above quotations the less applicable to our present purpose.

After this follow some dissuasives from crimes too shocking to be named; and immediately after the following beautiful maxims.

> "Tuum ama conjugem. Quid enim suavius et præstantius
> Quam si viro consentit chara uxor usque ad senectam,
> Et maritus suæ uxori, neque inter eos incidit contentio.
> Reverere canos circum tempora, cedeque senibus
> Sede et honoribus omnibus; natu verò præstantem
> Senem, æqualem patris, paribus cum patre, honoribus venerare.
> Servum ne lædas maledictis deferendo apud herum.
> Accipe vel a servo, si recte sapiat, consilium."

I have dwelt very long on this subject, because, if it be painful to be staggered in our belief of the immutability of moral distinctions by the first aspect of the History of Mankind, it affords a tenfold pleasure to those who feel themselves interested in the cause of morality, when they find, on an accurate examination, that those facts on which sceptics have laid the greatest stress, are not only consistent with the moral constitution of man, but result necessarily from this constitution, diversified in its effects according to the different circumstances in which the individual is situated. To trace in this manner the essential principles of the human frame, amidst the various disguises it borrows from accidental causes, is one of the most interesting employments of philosophical curiosity; nor is there perhaps a more satisfactory gratification to a liberal mind than when it recognises, under the superstition, the ignorance, and the loathsome sensualities of savage life, the kindred features of humanity, and the indelible vestiges of that divine image after which man was originally formed. One of the most pleasing facts of this kind that I have met with, is mentioned by Sparman, in his *Travels through the Southern Parts of Africa*, where he had occasion to visit a tribe of men, whom we are accustomed to consider as sunk, by the grossness and brutishness of their manners, to the lowest point in the scale of civilisation; and with this fact, (which I shall state in Sparman's own words, without any comment,) I shall at present dismiss this part of our argument.

"A Hottentot is rich in proportion to the number of his cattle; but the richest is clothed, fed, and attended, no better than the poor; more trinkets of brass, of shells, or of beads; more fat in dressing his victuals, or in anointing his body; the honour or advantage of being able to maintain more servants or cowherds. And that which constitutes the distinction of rank in this simple race of men is the divine pleasure of doing good to his fellow-creatures."

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUATION OF THE REMARKS ON THE OBJECTIONS STATED BY DIFFERENT WRITERS TO THE REALITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS, AND TO THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE MORAL FACULTY AMONG MANKIND.

The doctrines on this subject which I have hitherto been endeavouring to refute, (how erroneous soever in their principles, and dangerous in their consequences,) have been maintained by some writers who certainly were not unfriendly in their views to the interests of virtue and of mankind. In proof of this, I need only mention the name of Mr. Locke, who, in the course of a long and honourable life, distinguished himself no less by the exemplary worth of his private character, and by his ardent zeal for civil and religious liberty, than by the depth and originality of his philosophical speculations. His errors, however, ought not, on these accounts, to be treated with reverence; but, on the contrary, they require a more careful and severe examination, in consequence of the high authority they derive from his genius and his virtues. And, accordingly, I have enlarged on such of his opinions as seemed to me favourable to sceptical views concerning the foundation of morals, at much greater length than the ingenuity or plausibility of his reasonings in support of them may appear to some to have merited.

To these opinions of Locke, Lord Shaftesbury has alluded in various parts of his works with a good deal of indignation; and particularly in the following passage of his *Advice to an Author*. "One would imagine that our philosophical writers, who pretend to treat of morals, should far outdo our poets in recommending virtue, and representing what is *fair* and *amiable* in

human actions. One would imagine, that, if they turned their eyes towards remote countries, (of which they affect so much to speak,) they should search for that simplicity of manners, and innocence of behaviour, which has been often known among mere savages, ere they were corrupted by our commerce, and, by sad example, instructed in all kinds of treachery and inhumanity. 'Twould be of advantage to us to hear the cause of this strange corruption in ourselves, and be made to consider of our deviation from nature, and from that just purity of manners which might be expected, especially from a people so assisted and enlightened by religion. For who would not naturally expect more justice, fidelity, temperance, and honesty from Christians than from Mahometans or mere Pagans? But so far are our modern moralists from condemning any unnatural vices or corrupt manners, whether in our own or foreign climates, that they would have *vice* itself appear as natural as *virtue;* and, from the worst examples, would represent to us, 'that all actions are *naturally* indifferent; that they have no note or character of good or ill in *themselves*, but are distinguished by mere fashion, law, or *arbitrary* decree.' Wonderful philosophy! raised from the dregs of an illiterate mean kind, which was ever despised among the great ancients, and rejected by all men of action or sound erudition; but, in these ages, imperfectly copied from the original, and, with much disadvantage, imitated and assumed in common, both by devout and indevout attempters in the moral kind."*

Besides these incidental remarks on Locke, which occur in different parts of Shaftesbury's writings, there is a letter of his addressed to a student at the university, which relates almost entirely to the opinion we have been considering, and contains some excellent observations on the subject.

In this letter Lord Shaftesbury observes, that "all those called *free writers* now-a-days have espoused those principles which Mr. Hobbes set a-foot in this last age."—"Mr. Locke," he continues, "as much as I honour him on account of other writings, (on government, policy, trade, coin, education, tolera-

* [Part III. sect. iii.—*Characteristics*, Vol. I. p. 350, ed. 1711.]

tion, &c.,) and as well as I knew him, and can answer for his sincerity as a most zealous Christian and believer, did however go in the self-same track, and is followed by the Tindals, and all the other ingenious free authors of our time.

"'Twas Mr. Locke that struck the home-blow; for Mr. Hobbes's character and base slavish principles of government took off the poison of his philosophy. 'Twas Mr. Locke that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same with those of GOD) unnatural, and without foundation in our minds. *Innate* is a word he poorly plays upon; the right word, though less used, is *connatural*. For what has birth, or progress of the *fœtus* out of the womb, to do in this case? The question is not about the time the ideas entered, or the moment that one body came out of the other, but whether the constitution of man be such, that, being adult and grown up, at such or such a time, sooner or later, (no matter when,) the idea and sense of order, administration, and a God, will not infallibly, inevitably, necessarily spring up in him."*

In this last remark, Lord Shaftesbury appears to me to place the question concerning *innate ideas* upon the right and only philosophical footing, and to afford a key to all the confusion which runs through Locke's argument on the subject. The observations which follow are not less just and valuable; but I must not indulge myself in any farther extracts at present.[1]

* [See *Letters to a Student at the University*, Letter viii.]

[1] Notwithstanding, however, the countenance which Locke's reasonings against *innate practical principles* have the appearance of giving to the philosophy of Hobbes, I have not a doubt that the difference of opinion between him and Lord Shaftesbury on this point was almost entirely verbal. Of this I have elsewhere produced ample proofs; but the following passage will suffice for my present purpose. "I would not be mistaken, as if, because I deny an innate law, I thought there were none but positive laws. There is a great deal of difference between an *innate law* and a *law of nature*, between something imprinted on our minds in their very original, and something that we, being ignorant of, may attain to the knowledge of, by the use and due application of our natural faculties. And I think they equally forsake the truth, who, running into the contrary extremes, either affirm an innate law, or deny that there is a law knowable by the light of nature, without the help of a positive revelation." —Locke's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 44. (Law's 8vo edit.) [*Essay*, B. I. ch. iii. sect. 13.]

These passages of Shaftesbury, in some of which the warmth of his temper has betrayed him into expressions disrespectful to Locke, have drawn on him a number of very severe animadversions, particularly from Warburton, in the preface to his *Divine Legation of Moses*. But although Shaftesbury's personal allusions to Locke cannot be justified, some allowance ought to be made for the indignation of a generous mind at a doctrine which (however well meant by the proposer) strikes at the very root of morality. In this instance, too, it is not improbable that the discussion of the general argument may have added to the asperity of his style, by reviving the memory of the private controversies which, it is presumable, had formerly been carried on between Locke and him on this important subject. It is well known that Shaftesbury was Locke's pupil, and also that their tempers and literary tastes were not suitable to each other. In this it is commonly supposed that the former was to blame; but, I presume, not *wholly*. Dr. Warton tells us, "that Mr. Locke affected to despise poetry, and that he depreciated the ancients; which circumstance," he adds, "as I am informed from undoubted authority, was the subject of perpetual discontent and dispute between him and his pupil Lord Shaftesbury."[1] That Shaftesbury was not insensible to Locke's real merits, appears sufficiently from a passage in his first *Letter to a Student at the University*. "However, I am not sorry that I lent you Locke's *Essay*, a book that may as well qualify men for business and the world as for the sciences and the university. No one has done more towards the recalling of philosophy from barbarity into use and practice of the world, and into the company of the better and politer sort, who might well be ashamed of it in its other dress. No one has opened a better and clearer way to reasoning."

The theories concerning the origin of our moral ideas which we are now to consider, although they agree in many respects with that of Locke and his followers, have yet proceeded from very different views and intentions. They also involve some

[1] *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope.*

principles that are peculiar to themselves, and which, therefore, render a separate examination of them necessary for the complete illustration of this fundamental article of ethics. They have been distinguished by Mr. Smith by the name of *the licentious systems of morals*,*—a name which certainly cannot be censured as too harsh, when applied to those which maintain that the motives of all men are fundamentally the same, and that what we commonly call virtue is mere hypocrisy.

Among the licentious moralists of modern times, the most celebrated are, the Duke of la Rochefoucauld, author of the *Maxims and Moral Reflections*, and Dr. Mandeville, author of the *Fable of the Bees*. By the generality of our English philosophers, these two writers are commonly coupled together as advocates for the same system, although their views and their characters were certainly extremely different. In the first editions of Mr. Smith's *Theory*, he speaks of a licentious doctrine concerning morality, which, he says, "was first sketched by the delicate pencil of the Duke of la Rochefoucauld, and was afterwards enforced by the coarse but powerful eloquence of Dr. Mandeville." In the last [or *sixth*] edition of that work the name of La Rochefoucauld is omitted, from Mr. Smith's deliberate conviction that it was unjust to his memory to class him with an author whose writings tend directly to confound all our ideas of moral distinctions. On this point I speak from personal knowledge, having been requested by Mr. Smith, when I happened to be at Paris some years before his death, to express to the late excellent and unfortunate Duke of la Rochefoucauld his sincere regret for having introduced the name of his ancestor and that of Dr. Mandeville in the same sentence.

The Duke of la Rochefoucauld, author of the *Maxims*, was born in 1613, and died in 1680. The early part of his education was neglected; but the disadvantages he laboured under in consequence of this circumstance, he in a great measure overcame by the force of his own talents. According to Madam de Maintenon, who knew him well, "he was possessed of a

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VII. sect. ii. chap. 4.]

countenance prepossessing and interesting; of manners graceful and dignified; of much genius, and little acquired knowledge." The same excellent judge adds of him, that "he was intriguing, accommodating, and cautious; but that she had never known a friend more firm, more open, or whose counsels were of greater value. He loved raillery; and used to say, that personal bravery appeared to him nothing better than folly; and yet he himself was brave to an extreme. He preserved to the last the vivacity of his mind, which was always agreeable, though naturally serious."

In the share which he took in the political transactions of his times, he discovered a facility to engage in intrigues, without much steadiness in the pursuit of his object. This, at least, is a remark made on him by the Cardinal de Retz, who, in a portrait of him drawn with a masterly, though somewhat prejudiced hand, ascribes the apparent inconsistencies of his conduct to a natural want of resolution. A later writer,[1] more favourable to his memory, has attempted to account for them with much plausibility, by that superiority of penetration, and that rigid integrity, which all his contemporaries allow to have been distinguishing features in his character; and which, though not sufficient to keep him wholly disengaged from intrigues in a court where everything was put in motion by the spirit of party, rendered him soon disgusted with the pretended patriotism and the selfish politics of those with whom he acted. Accordingly, although he was induced by the force of early connexions, and a natural facility of temper, to involve himself during a part of his life in public affairs, and more particularly, to become a tool of the Duchess of Longueville in the cabals of the *Fronde*, his own taste seems to have attached him to a more private scene, where he could enjoy in freedom the society and friendship of a few chosen companions. Towards the end of his life he spent much of his time at the house of Madame de la Fayette, which appears, from the letters of her friend Madame de Sévigné, to have been, at that period, the resort of all persons distinguished for wit and refinement. It was in the

[1] M. Suard.

midst of this chosen society that he composed his *Memoirs of the Regency of Ann of Austria*, and also his *Moral Reflections and Maxims.*

Of these two works the former is written with much elegance, and with a great appearance of sincerity; but the events which it records are uninteresting in the present age. Bayle, in his *Dictionary*, gives it the preference to the *Commentaries* of Cæsar; but the judgment of the public has not been equally favourable. "*The Memoirs* of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld," says Voltaire in his account of the writers of the age of Louis XIV., "are *read;* but every one knows his *Maxims* by heart." In fact, it is almost entirely by these *Maxims* (which, as Montesquieu observes, *have become the proverbs of men of wit*) that the name of La Rochefoucauld is known; and it must be confessed that few performances have acquired to their authors a higher or more general reputation. "One of the works," says Voltaire, "which contributed most to form the taste of the nation to a justness and precision of thought and expression, was the small collection of maxims by Francis Duke of la Rochefoucauld. Although there is but one idea in the book, that self-love is the spring of all our actions, yet this idea is presented in so great a variety of forms as to be always amusing. When it first appeared, it was read with avidity; and it contributed, more than any other performance since the revival of letters, to accustom writers to indulge themselves in an originality of thought, and to improve the vivacity, precision, and delicacy of French composition.

That the tendency of these maxims is, upon the whole, unfavourable to morality; and that they always leave a disagreeable impression on the mind, must, I think, be granted.[1] At

[1] Mr. Spence, in his *Anecdotes*, ascribes to Mr. Pope a remark on La Rochefoucauld, which does no small honour to the poet's shrewdness and knowledge of human nature. I quote it in Spence's words. "As L'Esprit,* La Rochefoucauld, and that sort of people, prove that all virtues are disguised vices, I would engage to prove all vices to be disguised virtues. Neither

* Pope here had probably in view *Jacques Esprit*, author of a book entitled *Faussetés des Vertus Humaines*, (2 vols. Paris, 1678,) which is said to be nothing more than a dull commentary on La Rochefoucauld's maxims. (*Biog. Universelle*, Article *Esprit.*)

the same time, it may be fairly questioned if the motives of the author have in general been well understood, either by his admirers or by his opponents. In affirming that self-love is the spring of all our actions, there is no good reason for supposing that he meant to deny the reality of moral distinctions as a philosophical truth,—a supposition quite inconsistent with his own fine and deep remark, that *hypocrisy is itself a homage which vice renders to virtue.* He states it merely as a proposition, which, in the course of his experience as a man of the world, he had found very generally verified in the higher classes of society, and which he was induced to announce, without any qualification or restriction, in order to give more force and poignancy to his satire. In adopting this mode of writing he has unconsciously conformed himself, like many other French authors, who have since followed his example,[1] to a suggestion

indeed is true; but this would be a more agreeable subject, and would overturn their whole scheme."—See Spence's *Anecdotes of Men and Books*, Malone's Edition.

The above remark of Pope coincides in substance with a criticism of La Harpe on La Rochefoucauld's maxims.

"Non seulement cet ouvrage attriste et flétrit l'âme, mais il a un grand défaut en morale: C'est de ne montrer le cœur humain que sous un jour défavourable. Il y auroit peut-être tout autant de sagacité, et surement beaucoup plus de justice à démêler aussi ce qu'il y a dans l'homme de noble et de vertueux. Croit on que la vertu ne garde pas souvent son secret tout aussi bien que l'amour propre, et qu'il n'y ait pas autant de mérite à l'appercevoir?" —*Lycée*, Tom. X. p. 299.

[1] Thus it has often been said by French writers, that "*No man is a hero to his valet de chambre;*" and the maxim, when properly understood, has some foundation in truth. It probably was meant by its original author to refer only to those petty circumstances of temper and behaviour which, without affecting the essentials of character, have a tendency to diminish, on a near approach, the theatrical effect of great men. It has, however, been frequently quoted as implying that there are none whose virtues will bear a close examination; in which acceptation, it is not more injurious to human nature than it is contrary to fact. How much more profound, as well as more pleasing, is the remark of Plutarch! "Real virtue is most loved where it is most nearly seen, and no respect which it commands from strangers can equal the never-ceasing admiration it excites in the daily intercourse of domestic life."—(*Life of Pericles.*) It is indeed true, that some men, who are admired by the world, appear to most advantage when viewed at a distance; but, on the other hand, may it not be contended, that many who are objects of general odium would be found, if examined more nearly, not to be destitute of estimable and amiable qualities? May we not even go farther, and assert that the very worst of men have a mixture of good in their compo-

which Aristotle has stated with admirable depth and acuteness in his *Rhetoric*. "Sentences or apophthegms lend much aid to eloquence. One reason of this is, that they flatter the *pride* of the hearers, who are delighted, when the speaker, making use of general language, touches upon opinions which they had before known to be true in part. . . . Thus, a person who had the misfortune to live in a bad neighbourhood, or to have worthless children, would easily assent to the speaker who should affirm that '*Nothing* is more vexatious than neighbours,' or, '*Nothing* more irrational than to bring children into the world.'"* This observation of Aristotle, while it goes far to account for the imposing and dazzling effect of these rhetorical exaggerations, ought to guard us against the common and popular error of mistaking them for the serious and profound generalizations of science. As for La Rochefoucauld, we know, from the best authorities, that in private life he was a conspicuous example of all those moral qualities of which he seemed to deny the existence;[1] and that he exhibited, in this respect, a striking contrast to the Cardinal de Retz, who has presumed to censure him for his want of faith in the reality of virtue.[2]

In reading La Rochefoucauld, it should never be forgotten that it was within the vortex of a court he enjoyed his chief opportunities of studying the world, and that the narrow and exclusive circle in which he moved was not likely to afford him the most favourable specimens of human nature in general. Of the court of Louis XIV. in particular, we are told by a very nice and reflecting observer, (Madame de la Fayette,) that

sition, and to express a doubt whether human nature would gain or lose upon a thorough acquaintance with the conduct and motives of individuals.

* [Lib. II. cap. xxii. § 4.]

[1] In several of his maxims, for instance, he is at pains to depreciate the virtue of courage, and speaks of it in a way that might lead a careless reader to suspect that he felt in himself a deficiency of this quality. Yet we learn from his personal enemy, the Cardinal de Retz, that he was extremely brave, "Il n'a jamais été guerrier, quoiqu'il fut très soldat."—*Mémoires*, Tom. I. p. 312.

"Il aimoit a railler," says Madame de Maintenon, "il disoit *que la bravoure personelle lui paroissoit une folie;* et il étoit pourtant très brave."—*Letters of Madame de Maintenon.*

[2] "Ses maximes ne marquent pas assez de foi à la vertu."—*Mémoires*, Tom. I. p. 133.

"ambition and gallantry were the *soul*, actuating alike both men and women. So many contending interests, so many different cabals were constantly at work, and in all of those women bore so important a part, that love was always mingled with business, and business with love. Nobody was tranquil or indifferent. Every one studied to advance himself by pleasing, serving, or ruining others. Idleness and languor were unknown, and nothing was thought of but intrigues or pleasures."*

In the passage already quoted from Voltaire, he takes notice of the effect of La Rochefoucauld's *Maxims* in improving the style of French composition. We may add to this remark, that their effect has not been less sensible in vitiating the tone and character of French philosophy, by bringing into vogue those false and degrading representations of human nature, and of human life, which have prevailed in that country more or less for a century past. Mr. Addison, in one of the papers of the *Tatler*, expresses his indignation at this general bias among the French writers of his age. "It is impossible," he observes, "to read a passage in Plato, or Tully, or a thousand other ancient moralists, without being a greater and better man for it. On the contrary, I could never read any of our modish French authors, or those of our own country, who are the imitators and admirers of that nation, without being for some time out of humour with myself, and at everything about me. Their business is to depreciate human nature, and to consider it under the worst appearances; they give mean interpretations and base motives to the worthiest of actions. In short, they endeavour to make no distinction between man and man, or between the species of man and that of the brutes."[1]

From this time downwards we may trace the rise and progress of that disposition to *persiflage*, which has been so long characteristical of the higher orders in France, and which, a few years ago, some individuals in our own country were so

* [*Hist. d'Henriette*, &c.]

[1] [*Tatler*, No. 103.]—Some of the foregoing remarks on La Rochefoucauld are copied from the Preliminary *Dissertation to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica*, by the author of this work.—[See above, *Works*, Vol. I. p. 110.]

ambitious to copy. In France it seems to have attained to its greatest glory during the gay and unprincipled period of the regency; and ever since it has left sensible effects, not only on the tone of fashionable society, but on the spirit of most philosophical theories. Its principles are too fugitive to be reduced to any system; but fortunately a faithful and lively portrait of it is preserved for the information of posterity in one of the comedies of Gresset. The following speech of Cleon in the *Méchant* is an invaluable document for the history of French manners, (now, alas! too widely diffused all over the civilized world,) during the greater part of the eighteenth century.

"Oh! bon, quelle folie! êtes vous de ces gens
Soupçonneux, ombrageux? Croyez-vous aux méchans?
Et réalisez-vous cet être imaginaire,
Ce petit préjugé qui ne va qu'au vulgaire?
Pour moi, je n'y crois pas, (soit dit sans intérêt,)
Tout le monde est méchant, et personne ne l'est.
On reçoit et l'on rend; on est à peu près quitte;—
Parlez-vous des propos? Comme il est ni mérite,
Ni goût, ni jugement, qui ne soit contredit,
Que rien n'est vrai sur rien, qu'importe ce qu'on dit?
Tel sera mon héros, et tel sera le vôtre:
L'Aigle d'une maison n'est qu'un sot dans un autre.
Je dis ici qu'Eraste est un mauvais plaisant;
Eh bien! on dit ailleurs qu'Eraste est amusant.
Si vous parlez et des faits et des tracasseries,
Je n'y vois dans le fond que des plaisanteries;
Et si vous attachez du crime à tout cela,
Beaucoup d'honnêtes gens sont de ces fripons-là.
L'agrément couvre tout; il rend tout légitime.
Aujourd'hui dans le monde on ne connoit qu'un crime,
C'est l'ennui: pour le fuir tous les moyens sont bons.
Il gagneroit bientôt les meilleurs maisons,
Si l'on s'aimoit si fort: l'amusement circule
Par les préventions, les torts, le ridicule.
Au reste chacun parle et fait comme il l'entend;
Tout est mal, tout est bien: tout le monde est content."[1]

From the form in which La Rochefoucauld's *Maxims* are published, it is impossible to attempt a particular examination

[1] In subjoining a prose translation of these exquisite verses, I need scarcely say that I aim at nothing but to convey to the merely English reader a general conception of the drift and substance of the original:—

of them; nor, indeed, do I apprehend that such an examination is necessary for any of the purposes which I have at present in view. So far as their tendency is unfavourable to the reality of moral distinctions, it is the same with that of Mandeville's system; and, therefore, the strictures I am now to offer on the latter writer may be applied with equal truth to the general conclusions which some have chosen to draw from the satirical observations of the former.

Dr. Mandeville was born in Holland, where he received his education both in medicine and in philosophy. He made his first appearance in England about the beginning of the last century, and soon attracted very general attention by the vivacity and the licentiousness of his publications. One of his first performances was levelled at his own profession. It is entitled, *A Treatise on the Hypochondriac and Hysteric Passions, interspersed with Discourses in the way of Dialogue on the Art of Physic, and Remarks on the modern Practice of Physicians and Apothecaries.* The work, however, by which he is best

"Good heavens! what extravagance! Is it possible that you should belong to that suspicious and jealous tribe who believe in the existence of *the wicked?* And that your fancy should realize to itself that phantom which is conjured up by the low prejudices of the vulgar? For my own part, to speak impartially, *my* faith does not go quite so far. I consider everybody as bad, and nobody as bad. We all take and give, so as to balance our accounts pretty equally with each other. Do you speak of what passes in conversation? As there is neither merit, nor taste, nor opinion, which does not furnish matter of dispute,—as there is nothing which can be pronounced true of anything,—of what consequence is it what one says? One man shall be *my* hero, and another shall be yours; the idol of this house is the laughing-stock of the next. Here, for instance, I say of *Eraste*, that his attempts at wit are dull and pitiful; elsewhere you will find people that will tell you that they think *Eraste* an amusing companion. If you talk of the *actions* of men, and are hurt with their intrigues and duplicity, in *these*, when examined to the bottom, I see nothing but a fund of entertainment to myself. And were you to attach to things of this sort the idea of *crime*, how many respectable men would you be forced to number with the knaves? To be *agreeable* covers every fault, or serves as its apology. The only crime now known is *ennui*, and every thing is good which helps us to escape from it. Were people to feel any serious attachment to their friends, this evil would soon make its way into the best company; for the circulation of amusement depends on prejudices, on calumnies, and on absurdities. In short, everybody now speaks and acts according to his own humour. All is wrong, all is right, and all the world is equally happy."

known, is a poem printed in 1714, with the title of *The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves turned Honest;* upon which he afterwards wrote *Remarks*, and published the whole at London in 1723. This book was presented by the grand jury of Middlesex the same year, and was severely animadverted on soon after by some very eminent writers, particularly by Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, and by Dr. Hutcheson of Glasgow, in his various treatises on ethical subjects.

To the *Remarks on the Fable of the Bees*, the author has prefixed an *Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue;* and it is to this inquiry that I propose to confine myself chiefly in the following strictures, as it exhibits his peculiar opinions concerning the principles of morals in a more systematical form than any of his other writings. In the course of the observations which I have to offer with respect to it, I shall perhaps be led to repeat one or two remarks which were already suggested by the doctrines of Locke. But for this repetition I hope that the importance of the subject will be a sufficient apology.

The great object of Mandeville's *Inquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue*, is to show that all our moral sentiments are derived from *education*, and are the workmanship of politicians and lawgivers. "These," says he, "observing how selfish an animal man is, and how impossible, in consequence, it would be to retain numbers together in the same society without government, endeavoured to give his selfish principles a direction useful to the public. For this purpose they have laboured in all ages to convince him that it is better to restrain than to indulge his appetites, and to consult the public interest than his own. The engine they employed in working upon him was flattery, which they addressed to *vanity*, one of the strongest principles of our nature. They contrasted *man* with the *lower animals*, and magnified the advantages he possesses over them. The human race they divided into two classes; the mean and contemptible, who, after the example of the brutes, gratify every animal propensity; and the generous and high-spirited, who disdaining these low gratifications, bent their study to

cultivate the nobler principles of our nature, and waged a continual war with themselves to promote the happiness of others. In the case of men possessed of an extraordinary degree of pride and resolution, these representations of politicians and moralists were able to effectuate a complete conquest of their natural appetites and a complete contempt of their own *visible* interests; and even the feeble-minded and abject would be unwilling to rank themselves in the class to which they really belonged, and would strive to conceal their imperfections from the world, by their forwardness to swell the cry in praise of self-denial and of public spirit. Such," says Mandeville, "*was*, or at least *might have been*, the manner after which savage man was broke; and what we call the moral virtues are merely the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride."

I shall not insist on the absurdity of supposing, that *government* is an invention of political wisdom, and not the natural result of man's constitution, and of the circumstances in which he is placed. This, however improbable, is one of the least absurdities of Mandeville's system. Its capital defect consists in supposing, that the origin of our moral virtues may be accounted for from the power of *education;* a fundamental error which is common to the system of Mandeville and that of Locke, as commonly understood by his followers, and which I had formerly occasion to refute at great length. I shall not therefore enlarge upon it at present, but shall confine myself to those parts of Mandeville's philosophy which are peculiar to himself.

It appears from the passage formerly quoted, that the engine which Mandeville supposes politicians to employ for the purpose of creating the artificial distinction between virtue and vice, is *vanity* or *pride*, which two words he uses as synonymous. He employs them likewise in a much more extensive sense than their common acceptation authorizes; to denote, not only an overweening conceit of our own character and attainments, or a weak and childish passion for the admiration of others, but that *reasonable desire for the esteem* of our

fellow-creatures which, so far from being a weakness, is a laudable and respectable principle.

The desire of esteem, and the dread of contempt, are undoubtedly among the strongest principles of our nature; but in good minds they are only subsidiary to the desire of excellence, nay, they cannot be effectually gratified if they are the first springs of our actions. To be pleased with the applause of others, it is not sufficient to possess the *appearance* of good qualities, we must possess the *reality*. A man of sense and delicacy is never more mortified that when he receives praise for qualities which he knows do not belong to him; and he is comforted, under the mistaken censures of the world, by the consciousness he does not deserve them. A desire of applause may, without detracting from our merit, mingle itself with the more worthy motives of our conduct; but if it is the *sole* motive, the attainment of the object will never communicate a lasting satisfaction.

> "Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret,
> Quem, nisi mendosum et mendacem?"[1]

Vanity, in propriety of speech, denotes a weakness arising from a perversion of the *desire of esteem*. A man is *vain* who values himself on what is unworthy of regard, as the external distinctions of equipage or dress. He, too, is *vain* who wishes to pass in the world for what he really *is not*, and boasts of qualities which he does not possess. We also give the name of *vanity* to that weakness which disposes a man to be pleased with flattery, and which leads him not only to desire the esteem of others, but to place his happiness in public expressions of it. In every case, *vanity* denotes a weakness which is carefully to be distinguished from the love of true glory.

Mandeville uses the word to express every sentiment of regard that we feel for the good opinion of others; and, wherever this regard can be supposed to have had any influence on our conduct he concludes that *vanity* was our principle of action.

From these observations, added to those formerly made on

[1] Horace, *Epist.* xvi. 39.

Locke, it follows, in the first place, That the whole of our moral sentiments cannot be accounted for from education. 2dly, That, by confounding together *vanity*, and a reasonable regard to the *esteem* of our fellow-creatures, Mandeville has expressed the fundamental proposition of his system in terms so vague and ambiguous, as renders it impossible to form a distinct conception of his meaning. And, 3dly, That even this reasonable and laudable desire of esteem cannot be effectually gratified, if it be the sole principle of our conduct; and therefore, cannot be *the only* source of our moral virtues.

From the principle of *vanity*, Mandeville endeavours to account for all the instances of self-denial that have occurred in the world. But he is not satisfied with explaining away in this manner the reality of moral distinctions. He endeavours to show that human life is nothing but a scene of hypocrisy, and that there is really little or none of that self-denial to be found that some men lay claim to. In his theory of moral virtue, he seems to allow that education may not only teach a man to check his appetites in order to procure the esteem of others, but that it may teach him to consider such a conquest over the lower principles of his nature as noble in itself, and as elevating him still further than nature had done above the level of the brutes. "Those men," says he, "who have laboured to establish societies endeavoured, in the first place, to insinuate themselves into the hearts of men by flattery, extolling the excellencies of our nature above other animals. They next began to instruct them in the notions of honour and shame, representing the one as the worst of all evils, and the other as the highest good to which mortals could aspire;—which being done, they laid before them how unbecoming it was the dignity of such sublime creatures to be solicitous about gratifying those appetites which they had in common with the brutes, and at the same time unmindful of those higher qualities that gave them the pre-eminence over all visible beings. They, indeed, confessed that these impulses of nature were very pressing; that it was troublesome to resist, and very difficult wholly to subdue them. But this they only used as an argument to demonstrate how glorious the conquest

of them was on the one hand, and how scandalous on the other not to attempt it."

These arguments, it is evident, are addressed to *pride* rather than to *vanity;* and it is worthy of remark, that, though Mandeville never states the distinction between these two words, but, on the contrary, affects to consider them as synonymous, he plainly was aware of the import of both, and sometimes uses the one, and sometimes the other, as best suits his purpose. Thus, in the following passage, if the word *vanity* were substituted instead of *pride*, the impropriety could not escape the most careless reader.—"Such men, as from no other motive but their love of *goodness*, perform a worthy action in silence, have, I confess, acquired more refined notions of virtue than those I have hitherto spoke of, yet even in these (with whom the world has never yet swarmed) we may discover no small symptoms of *pride;* and the humblest man alive must confess that the reward of a virtuous action, which is the satisfaction that ensues upon it, consists in a certain pleasure he procures to himself, by contemplating on his own worth; which pleasure, together with the occasion of it, are as certain signs of *pride*, as looking pale and trembling at any imminent danger are the symptoms of fear."

From these passages, however, it is abundantly clear that, in his Theory of Virtue, Mandeville admits the possibility of self-denial being exercised merely for the private gratification of the pride of the individual, without any regard to the opinions of other men. But, in his commentary on the *Fable of the Bees*, he goes much further, and attempts to show that there is really no self-denial in the world, and that what we call a conquest is only a concealed indulgence of our passions. To establish this point, he avails himself of the ambiguity of language. The passion of sex he, in every case, calls lust; everything which exceeds what is necessary for the support of life, he calls luxury; and thus confounding the innocent and reasonable gratifications of our passions with their vicious excesses, he pretends to show that there is really no virtue among men. "There are some of our passions," says Mr. Smith, "which have no other names

except those which mark the disagreeable and offensive degree. The spectator is more apt to take notice of them in this degree than in any other. When they shock his own sentiments, when they give him some sort of antipathy and uneasiness, he is necessarily obliged to attend to them, and is from thence naturally led to give them a name. When they fall in with the natural state of his own mind, he is very apt to overlook them altogether; and either gives them no name at all, or, if he gives them any, it is one which marks rather the subjection and restraint of the passion, than the degree which it is still allowed to subsist in after it is so subjected and restrained. Thus, the common names of the love of pleasure, and of the love of sex, denote a vicious and offensive degree of those passions. The words temperance and chastity, on the other hand, seem to mark rather the restraint and subjection in which they are kept under, than the degree which they are still allowed to subsist in. When he can show, therefore, that they still subsist in some degree, he imagines he has entirely demolished the reality of the virtues of temperance and chastity, and shown them to be mere impositions upon the inattention and simplicity of mankind. Those virtues, however, do not require an entire insensibility to the objects of the passions which they mean to govern. They only aim at restraining the violence of those passions so far as not to hurt the individual, and neither to disturb nor offend the society."

"It is the great fallacy of Dr. Mandeville's book to represent every passion as wholly vicious, which is so in any degree, and in any direction. It is thus that he treats everything as vanity which has any reference either to what are, or what ought to be, the sentiments of others; and it is by means of this sophistry that he establishes his favourite conclusion, that private vices are public benefits. If the love of magnificence, a taste for the elegant arts and improvements of human life, for whatever is agreeable in dress, furniture, or equipage, for architecture, statuary, painting, and music, is to be regarded as luxury, sensuality, and ostentation, even in those whose situation allows, without any inconveniency, the indulgence of those passions, it

is certain that luxury, sensuality, and ostentation are public benefits, since, without the qualities upon which he thinks proper to bestow such opprobrious names, the arts of refinement could never find employment, and must languish for want of encouragement. Some popular ascetic doctrines which had been current before his time, and which placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our passions, were the real foundation of this licentious system. It was easy for Dr. Mandeville to prove, first, that this entire conquest never actually took place among men; and, secondly, that, if it was to take place universally, it would be pernicious to society, by putting an end to all commerce and industry, and, in a manner, to the whole business of human life. By the first of these propositions he seemed to prove, that there was no real virtue, and that what pretended to be such was a mere cheat and imposition upon mankind; and by the second, that private vices were public benefits, since without them no society could prosper or flourish."*

In the passage now quoted from Mr. Smith, a reference is made to a favourite opinion of Dr. Mandeville's, "*that private vices are public benefits;*" an opinion of which I have not hitherto had occasion to take notice, and which my present subject does not lead me particularly to examine. I shall therefore only remark, in addition to what Mr. Smith has said, that, in so far as Mandeville's reasonings on this point have any foundation in truth, they but authorize the following conclusion, that there are cases in which the selfish passions of individuals lead to a conduct useful to society, and in which private vices are rendered sources of public prosperity, by that overruling power which in this, as in many other instances, brings good out of evil.

But although it does not belong to my present subject to examine the truth of this very dangerous maxim, I cannot help remarking its striking inconsistency with the doctrine maintained by the same author in his *Inquiry concerning Virtue*. In that performance the *utility* of what is commonly called

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VII. sect. ii. chap. 4.]

virtue is uniformly supposed. "Politicians," we are told expressly, "agreed to call everything which, without regard to the public, man should commit to gratify any of his appetites, *vice*, if in that action there could be observed the least prospect that it might either be injurious to any of the society, or even render himself less serviceable to others: And to give the name of *virtue* to every performance by which man, contrary to the impulse of nature, should endeavour the benefit of others, or the conquest of his own passions, out of a rational ambition of being good." How are these definitions to be reconciled with the proposition, "that private vices are public benefits?"

I shall not enter into a more particular examination of Mandeville's doctrines. I cannot, however, leave the subject without observing, that the *impression* which the author's writings produce on the mind affords a sufficient refutation of his principles. It was considered by Cicero as a strong presumption against the system of Epicurus, that "it breathed nothing generous or noble," (nihil magnificum, nihil generosum sapit;*) and the same presumption will be found to apply with tenfold force to that theory which has been now under our discussion. If there be no real distinction between virtue and vice—if the account given by Mandeville of the constitution of our nature be a just one—why do his reasonings render us *dissatisfied* with our own characters, or inspire us with a detestation and contempt for mankind? Why do we turn with pleasure from the dark and uncomfortable prospects which *he* presents to us, to the delightful and elevating views of human nature which are exhibited in those philosophical systems which he attempts to explode? It will be said, perhaps, that all this arises from pride or vanity. When we read Mandeville we are ashamed of the species to which we belong; while, on the contrary, our pride is gratified by those sublime but fallacious descriptions of disinterested virtue, with which the weakness or hypocrisy of some popular writers has flattered the moral enthusiasm of the multitude. But if Mandeville's account of our nature be just, whence is it that we come to have

* [*De Finibus*, Lib. I. cap. vii.]

an idea of one class of qualities as more excellent and meritorious than another? Why do we consider pride or vanity as a less worthy motive for our conduct than disinterested patriotism or friendship, or a determined adherence to what we believe to be our duty? Why does human nature appear to us less amiable in *his* writings than in the writings of Addison? or whence the origin of those opposite sentiments which the very names of Addison and of Mandeville inspire? We shall admit the fact with respect to the *actual* depravity of man to be as he states it; but does not the impression his system leaves on the mind demonstrate that we are at least formed with the love and admiration of moral excellence, and that virtue was intended to be the law of our conduct? The question concerning the actual attainments of man must not be confounded with the question concerning the reality of moral distinctions. If Mandeville is successful in establishing his doctrine on the first of these points, the dissatisfaction his conclusions leave on the mind is sufficient to overturn his doctrine with respect to the latter. The remark of La Rochefoucauld, that "*hypocrisy itself is an homage which vice renders to virtue*,"* involves a satisfactory reply to all the arguments that have been ever drawn from the prevailing corruption of mankind against the moral constitution of human nature.

It is the capital defect of this system to confound together the two questions I have just stated, and to substitute a satire on vice and folly instead of a philosophical account of those moral principles which form an essential part of our frame. That there is a great deal of truth mixed with the sophistry it contains, I am ready to acknowledge; and if the author's remarks had been thrown into the form of satires, many of them might have been useful to the world, by the light they throw on human character, and by the assistance which individuals may derive from them in examining their own motives of action. Some apology might have been made, in this case, for the colourings which the author's facts have borrowed from his imagination. The object of the satirist is to reform; and for

* [*Maximes.*]

this purpose it may sometimes be of use to exaggerate the prevailing vices and follies of the time, in order to contrast more strongly what mankind *are*, with what they *might* and *ought* to be. But the satirist who wishes well to his species, while he indulges his indignation against prevailing corruptions, will recollect, that, if his censures are just, they presuppose the reality of moral distinctions; and while he laments the depravity of the race, and chastises the follies and vices of individuals, he will reverence morality as the *divine law*, and those essential principles of the human frame which bear the manifest signature of the divine workmanship. To attempt to depreciate these, can never answer a good purpose. On the contrary, it has a tendency to fill the minds of good men with a desponding scepticism, and to stifle every generous and active exertion; and if it does not actually increase the depravity of the world, it tends at least to strengthen the effrontery of vice, and to expose the wiser and better part of mankind to the impertinent raillery of fools and profligates.

The following passage from Mr. Harris will form no improper conclusion to these observations. The sentiments it contains are equally just and refined, and do much honour to the benevolence of the author.

"As man is by nature a social animal, good humour seems an ingredient highly necessary to his character. 'Tis the salt which gives the seasoning to the feast of life, and which, if it be wanting, surely renders the feast incomplete. Many causes contribute to impair this amiable quality, and nothing, perhaps, more than bad opinions of mankind. Bad opinions of mankind naturally lead us to misanthropy. If these bad opinions go further, and are applied to the universe, then they lead to something worse, for they lead to atheism. The melancholy and morose character being thus insensibly formed, morals and piety sink of course; for what equals have we to love, or what superior have we to revere, when we have no other objects left than those of hatred or of terror?

"Misanthropy is so dangerous a thing, and goes so far in sapping the very foundations of morality and religion, that I

esteem the last part of Swift's *Gulliver* (*that* I mean relative to his Houyhnms and Yahoos) to be a worse book to peruse, than those which are forbid as the most flagitious and obscene.

"One absurdity in this author (a wretched philosopher though a great wit) is well worth remarking. In order to render the nature of man odious, and the nature of beasts amiable, he is compelled to give human characters to his beasts, and beastly characters to his men; so that we are to admire the beasts, not for being beasts, but amiable men, and to detest the men, not for being men, but detestable beasts.

"Whoever has been reading this unnatural filth, let him turn for a moment to a *Spectator of Addison*, and observe the philanthropy of that classical writer; I may add the superior purity of his diction and his wit."[1]

[1] *Works* of James Harris, Esq., vol. ii. p. 582. [4to edition.—*Philological Inquiries*, Part III. chap. xv.]

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS OF OUR MORAL PERCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONS.

Before proceeding to this extensive and difficult subject, I shall quote a passage from Dr. Butler, in which he has combined together, and compressed into the compass of a few paragraphs, all the most important arguments in proof of the existence of the moral faculty which have been hitherto under our review. While this quotation serves as a summary of what has already been stated, it will, I hope, prepare us for entering on the following discussions with greater interest and a more enlightened curiosity.

"That which renders beings capable of moral government is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions: so also are we. But, additional to this, we have a capacity for reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought; and on doing this we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving faculty is certain from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognising it in each other. It appears from our exercising it unavoidably in the approbation and disapprobation even of feigned characters: From the words, right and wrong, odious and amiable, base and worthy, with many others of like signification in all languages, applied to actions and characters: From the many written systems of morals which suppose it, since it cannot be imagined that all these authors, throughout all these treatises,

had absolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chimerical: From our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good and intending it: From the like distinction every one makes between injury and mere harm, which Hobbes says is peculiar to mankind, and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, prior to the consideration of human laws. It is manifest great part of common language and of common behaviour over the world is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty, whether called Conscience, Moral Reason, Moral Sense, or Divine Reason,—whether considered as a sentiment [perception] of the Understanding, or as a perception [sentiment] of the Heart,[1] or, which seems the truth, as including both. Nor is it at all doubtful in the general what course of action this faculty, or practical discerning power within us, approves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars, yet in general there is in reality a universally acknowledged standard of it. *It is that which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public,—it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of,—it is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind, namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good.*"[2]

Upon the various topics here suggested, a copious and instructive commentary might be written, but I think it better to leave them in the concise and impressive form in which they are proposed by the author.

The science of ethics has been divided by modern writers into two parts; the one comprehending the theory of morals, and the other its practical doctrines. The questions about

[1] There is here, I suspect, a typographical mistake. Butler, I have no doubt, wrote a *perception of the understanding*, or a *sentiment of the heart*.—[This emendation is silently adopted by Dr. Whewell in his edition of the *Dissertation;* see p. 54.—*Ed.*]

[2] *Dissertation II.—On the Nature of Virtue*, subjoined to Butler's *Analogy*.—[Part I. From the commencement.]

which the former is employed are chiefly the two following: *First*, by what *principle* of our constitution are we led to form the notion of moral distinctions,—whether by that faculty which perceives the distinction between truth and falsehood in the other branches of human knowledge, or by a peculiar power of perception (called by some the moral sense) which is *pleased* with one set of qualities and *displeased* with another? *Secondly*, what is the proper object of moral approbation; or, in other words, what is the common quality or qualities belonging to all the different modes of virtue? Is it benevolence, or a rational self-love, or a disposition (resulting from the ascendant of reason over passion) to act suitably to the different relations in which we are placed? These two questions seem to exhaust the whole theory of morals. The scope of the one is to ascertain the origin of our moral ideas; that of the other to refer the phenomena of moral perception to their most simple and general laws.

The practical doctrines of morality comprehend all those rules of conduct which profess to point out the proper ends of human pursuit, and the most effectual means of attaining them; to which we may add, under the general title of *adminicles*, (if I may be allowed to borrow a technical word of Lord Bacon's,) all those literary compositions, whatever be their particular form, which have for their aim to fortify and animate our good dispositions by delineations of the beauty, of the dignity, or of the utility of virtue.

I shall not inquire at present into the justness of this division. I shall only observe that the words *theory* and *practice* are not in this instance employed in their usual acceptations. The theory of morals does not bear, for example, the same relation to the practice of morals that the theory of geometry bears to practical geometry. In this last science all the practical rules are founded on theoretical principles previously established. But, in the former science, the practical rules are obvious to the capacities of all mankind, while the theoretical principles form one of the most difficult subjects of discussion that have ever exercised the ingenuity of metaphysicians.

Although, however, a complete acquaintance with the *practice* of our duty does not presuppose any knowledge of the theory of morals, it does not therefore follow that false theoretical notions upon this subject may not be attended with very pernicious consequences. On the contrary, nothing is more evident than this, that every system which calls in question the immutability of moral distinctions, has a tendency to undermine the foundations of *all* the virtues, both private and public, and to dry up the best and purest sources of human happiness. When sceptical doubts have once been excited in the mind by the perusal of such systems, no exhortation to the practice of our duties can have any effect; and it is necessary for us, before we think of addressing the heart, or influencing the will, to begin with undeceiving and enlightening the understanding. It is for this reason, that, in such an age as the present, when sceptical doctrines have been so anxiously disseminated by writers of genius, it appears to me to be a still more essential object in academical instruction, to vindicate the theory of morals against the cavils of licentious metaphysicians, than to indulge in the more interesting and popular disquisitions of practical ethics. On the former subject much yet remains to be done. On the latter, although the field of inquiry is by no means as yet completely exhausted, the student may be safely trusted to his own serious reflections, guided by the precepts of those illustrious men who, in different ages and countries, have devoted their talents to the improvement and happiness of the human race.

In this department of literature no country whatever has surpassed our own; whether we consider the labours of the great lights of the English Church, or the fugitive essays of those later writers who (after the example of Addison) have attempted to enlist in the cause of virtue and religion, whatever aid fancy, and wit, and elegance, could lend to the support of truth. It is scarcely necessary for me to mention the advantage which may be derived in the same study from the philosophical remains of ancient Greece and Rome,—due allowances being made for some unfortunate prejudices pro-

duced or encouraged by violent and oppressive systems of policy. Indeed, with the exception of a few such prejudices, it may, with great truth, be asserted, that they who have been most successful in modern times in inculcating the duties of life, have been the moralists who have trode the most closely in the footsteps of the Greek and Roman philosophers. The case is different with respect to the theory of morals, which, among the ancients, attracted comparatively but a small degree of attention, although one of the questions formerly mentioned (that concerning the *object* of moral approbation) was a favourite subject of discussion in their schools. The other question, however, (that concerning the *principle* of moral approbation,) with the exception of a few hints in the writings of Plato, may be considered as in a great measure peculiar to modern Europe, having been chiefly agitated since the writings of Cudworth in opposition to those of Hobbes; and it is this question accordingly, (recommended at once by its novelty and difficulty to the curiosity of speculative men,) that has produced most of the theories which characterize and distinguish from each other the later systems of moral philosophy.

It appears to me that the diversity of these systems has arisen, in a great measure, from the partial views which different writers have taken of the same complicated subject; that these systems are by no means so exclusive of each other as has commonly been imagined; and that, in order to arrive at the truth, it is necessary for us, instead of attaching ourselves to any one, to avail ourselves of the lights which all of them have furnished. Our moral perceptions and emotions are, in fact, the result of different principles combined together. They involve a judgment of the understanding, and they involve also a feeling of the heart;[1] and it is only by attending to both that

[1] The same remark is made in a passage already [p. 276] quoted from Dr Butler, whose slightest hints are entitled to attention, as they seem to have been all scrupulously and deliberately weighed. "It is manifest great part of common language, and of common behaviour over the world, is formed upon supposition of a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a perception of the understanding, or as a sentiment of the heart, *or which seems the truth, as including both*."

we can form a just notion of our moral constitution. In confirmation of this remark, it will be necessary for us to analyze particularly the state of our minds, when we are spectators of any good or bad action performed by another person, or when we reflect on the actions performed by ourselves. On such occasions we are conscious of three different things:

(1.) The perception of an action as right or wrong.

(2.) An emotion of pleasure or of pain, varying in its degree according to the acuteness of our moral sensibility.

(3.) A perception of the merit or demerit of the agent.

SECT. I.—OF THE PERCEPTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG.

The controversy concerning the origin of our moral ideas took its rise in modern times, in consequence of the writings of Mr. Hobbes. According to him we approve of virtuous actions, or of actions beneficial to society, from self-love, as we know that whatever promotes the interest of society, has on that very account an indirect tendency to promote our own. He further taught, that, as it is to the institution of government we are indebted for all the comforts and the confidence of social life, the laws which the civil magistrate enjoins are the ultimate standards of morality.

Dangerous as these doctrines are, some apology may be made for the author from the unfortunate circumstances of the times in which he lived. He had been a witness of the disorders which took place in England at the time of the dissolution of the monarchy by the death of Charles the First; and, in consequence of his mistaken speculations on the politics of that period, he contracted a bias in favour of despotical government, and was led to consider it as the duty of a good citizen to strengthen, as much as possible, the hands of the civil magistrate, by inculcating the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. It was with this view that he was led to maintain the philosophical principles which have been already mentioned. He seems likewise to have formed a very unfavourable idea of the clerical order, from the instances which his own ex-

perience afforded of their turbulence and ambition; and on that account he wished to subject the consciences of men immediately to the secular powers. In consequence of this, his system, although offensive in a very high degree to all sound moralists, provoked in a more peculiar manner the resentment of the clergy, and drew on the author a great deal of personal obloquy, which neither his character in private life, nor his intentions as a writer, appear to have merited.

Among the antagonists of Hobbes, the most eminent by far was Dr. Cudworth; and indeed modern times have not produced an author who was better qualified to do justice to the very important argument he undertook, by his ardent zeal for the best interests of mankind, by his singular vigour and comprehensiveness of thought, and by the astonishing treasures he had collected of ancient literature.

That our ideas of right and wrong are not derived from positive law Cudworth concluded from the following argument:—"Suppose such a law to be established, it must either be right to obey it, and wrong to disobey it, or indifferent whether we obey or disobey it. But a law which it is indifferent whether we obey or not, cannot, it is evident, be the source of moral distinctions; and, on the contrary supposition, if it is right to obey the law, and wrong to disobey it, these distinctions must have had an existence antecedent to the law."[1] In a word, it is from *natural* law that *positive* law derives all its force.

The same argument against Hobbes is thus stated by Lord Shaftesbury.

"'Tis ridiculous to say there is any obligation on man to act sociably or honestly in a formed government, and not in that which is commonly called the state of nature. For, to speak in the fashionable language of our modern philosophy, society being founded on a compact, the surrender made of every man's private unlimited right into the hands of the majority, or such as the majority should appoint, was of free choice, and by a promise. Now the promise itself was made in a state of nature, and that

[1] Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Vol. II. pp. 334, 335; 6th edit. [Part VI. sect. iii. ch. 2. See also *Immutable Morality*, B. I. ch. i.—*Ed.*]

which could make a promise obligatory in the state of nature, must make all other acts of humanity as much our real duty and natural part. Thus faith, justice, honesty, and virtue, must have been as early as the state of nature, or they could never have been at all. The civil union or confederacy could never make right or wrong, if they subsisted not before. He who was free to any villany before his contract, will and ought to make as free with his contract when he thinks fit. The natural knave has the same reason to be a civil one, and may dispense with his politic capacity as oft as he sees occasion; 'tis only his word stands in the way. A man is obliged to keep his word. Why? because he has given his word to keep it. Is not this a notable account of the original of moral justice, and the rise of civil government and allegiance!"*

To these observations it may be added, that our notions of right and wrong are so far from owing their origin to positive institutions, that they afford us the chief standard to which we appeal, in comparing different positive institutions with each other. Were it not for this test, how could we pronounce one code to be more humane, more liberal, or more equitable, than another? or how could we feel that, in our own municipal regulations, some are consonant and others repugnant to the principles of justice? "Let any one," says a learned and judicious civilian, [Dr. John Taylor,] "acquaint himself with the sanguinary system of Draco, and then view it as tempered with the philosophy of Solon, and the softer refinements of a better age; let him look with the eye of speculation upon an establishment that directs 'not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk; not to muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn; when our brother's cattle go astray or fall down by the way, not to hide ourselves from them; that acquits the betrothed damsel who was violated at a distance, and out of hearing, upon this compassionate suggestion,—for he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her;' let him reflect, I say, on his own feelings when he considers these

* [*Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, Part III. sect. i. *Characteristics*, Vol. I. p. 109, ed. 1711.]

different enactments, and then judge how far they agree with the philosophy of Hobbes."[1]

Agreeably to this view of positive institutions, Demosthenes remarks, "The laws of a country may be regarded as a *criterion* for estimating the morals of the state, and the prevailing character of the people." I shall quote the passage I allude to in the version of the Latin translator. "Illud igitur vobis est etiam considerandum, multos Græcorum sæpe decrevisse, vestris utendum esse legibus: id quod vobis laudi haud injuriâ ducitis. Nam verum illud mihi videtur, quod quendam apud vos dixisse ferunt: OMNES CORDATOS IN EA ESSE SENTENTIA, UT LEGES NIHIL ALIUD ESSE PUTENT QUAM MORES CIVITATIS. Danda igitur est opera, ut eæ quam optimæ esse videantur."[2]

It is justly observed by Cudworth, that the doctrines now under consideration are not peculiar to the system of Hobbes; and that similar opinions have been entertained in all ages by those writers who were either anxious to flatter the passions of tyrannical rulers, or who had a secret bias to atheistic and Epicurean principles.

In confirmation of this remark, he takes a review of the principal attempts that have been made to undermine the foundations of morals, both in ancient and modern times, and interweaves with this history many profound reflections of his own. The following paragraphs contain the substance of this part of his work, and I hope will furnish an interesting as well as useful introduction to the reasonings I am afterwards to offer in vindication of the reality and immutability of moral distinctions.

[1*st*,] "As the vulgar generally look no higher for the original of moral good and evil, just and unjust, than the codes and pandects, the tables and laws of their country and religion, so there have not wanted pretended philosophers *in all ages*, who have asserted nothing to be good and evil, just and unjust, *naturally and immutably*, (φύσει καὶ ἀκινήτως;) but that all these things were positive, arbitrary, and factitious only. Such Plato mentions," (in his Tenth Book, *De Legibus*,) "who maintained,

[1] Taylor, *On the Civil Law*, p. 159. [2] Ibid. p. 160.

' that nothing at all was *naturally* just, but men, changing their opinions concerning them perpetually, sometimes made one thing just, sometimes another; but whatever is decreed and constituted, that for the time is valid, being made so by acts and laws, but not by any nature of its own.' And Aristotle more than once takes notice of this opinion in his *Ethics*. ' Things honest and just, which politics are conversant about, have so great a variety and uncertainty in them, that they seem to be only by law and not by nature.' And afterwards (Lib. V. c. x.) having divided (*τὸ δίκαιον πολιτικὸν*) that which is politically just, into (*φυσικὸν, i.e.*) natural, which has everywhere the same force, and (*Νόμιμον, i.e.*) legal, which, before there be a law made, is indifferent, but, when once the law is made, is determined to be just or unjust; he adds, ' Some there are that think there is no other just or unjust but what is made by law and men, because that which is natural is immutable, and hath everywhere the same force, whereas *jura* and *justa*, rights and just things, are everywhere different.' The latter, therefore, they conceive to be analogous to wine and wheat measures, which vary from place to place, according to local customs; the former they compare to the properties of *fire*, which produce the same effects in Persia and Greece.

" 2*d*, After these succeeded *Epicurus*, the reviver of the Democritical philosophy, the frame of whose principles must needs lead him to deny justice and injustice to be natural things; and, therefore, he determines that they arise wholly from mutual acts and covenants of men, made for their own convenience and utility. Those living creatures that could not make mutual covenants together not to hurt, nor to be hurt, by one another, could not, for this cause, have any such thing as just or unjust among them. And there is the same reason for those nations that either will not, or cannot make such compacts: For there is no such thing as justice by itself, but only in the mutual congresses of men. Or (as the late compiler of the Epicurean system expresses the same meaning) there are some who think that those things which are just are just according to their proper unvaried nature, and that the

laws do not make them just, but only prescribe according to that nature which they have: But *the thing is not so.*[1] . . .

"3*d*, And since in this latter age the physiological hypotheses of Democritus and Epicurus have been revived, and successfully applied to the solving of some of the phenomena of the visible world, there have not wanted some that have endeavoured to vent also those other paradoxes of the same philosophy, viz., that there is no incorporeal substance, nor any natural difference between good and evil, just and unjust, and to recommend the same under a show of wisdom, as the deep and profound mysteries of the atomical and corpuscular philosophy, as if senseless matter and atoms were the original of all things, according to the song of old Silenus in Virgil. Of this sort is that late writer of Ethics and Politics, [Hobbes,] who asserts 'that there are no authentic doctrines concerning just and unjust, good and evil, except the laws which are established in every city; and that it concerns none to inquire whether an action be reputed just or unjust, good or evil, except such only whom the community have appointed to be the interpreters of their laws.'

"In the state of nature (according to him) nothing can be *unjust*, and the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power there is no law; where no law, no transgression. No law can be unjust.[2] Nay, temperance is no more naturally right, according to this philosopher, than justice. Sensuality, in the sense in which it is condemned, hath no place till there be laws.[3] . . .

"4*th*, But whatsoever was the true meaning of these philosophers that affirm justice and injustice to be only by law, and

[1] It may be proper to mention that Cudworth alludes here to Gassendi, who was at much pains to revive the philosophy of Epicurus, both in physics and morals, rejecting, however, or palliating those parts of it which are most exceptionable. With this philosopher (who appears to have been a most amiable and exemplary man in private life, and who, in learning, was not surpassed by any of his contemporaries,) Hobbes lived in habits of very intimate friendship during his long residence in France.

[2] *Leviathan*, p. 63.

[3] Ibid. p. 182

not by nature, certain it is that diverse modern theologers do not only seriously but zealously contend, in like manner, that there is nothing absolutely, intrinsically, and naturally good and evil, just and unjust, antecedently to any positive command or prohibition of God, but that the arbitrary will and pleasure of God, (that is an Omnipotent Being, devoid of all essential and natural justice,) by its commands and prohibitions, is the first and only rule and measure thereof. Whence it follows unavoidably, that nothing can be imagined so grossly wicked, or so foully unjust or dishonest, but, if it were supposed to be commanded by this omnipotent Deity, must needs, upon that hypothesis, become holy, just, and righteous. For, though the ancient fathers of the Christian church were very abhorrent from this doctrine, yet it crept up afterward in the scholastic age, Ockham being among the first that maintained that there is no act evil, but as it is prohibited by God, and which cannot be made good, if it be commanded by him. And herein Petrus Alliacus [de Alliaco, d'Ailly,] and Andreas de Novo Castro, with others, quickly followed him. . . .

"Now the necessary and unavoidable consequences of this opinion are such as these, that to love God is *by nature* an indifferent thing, and is morally good only because it is enjoined by his command: that holiness is not a conformity with the divine nature and attributes: that God hath no natural inclination to the good of the creatures, and might *justly* doom an innocent creature to eternal torment; all which propositions, with others of the kind, are word for word asserted by some late authors. Though I think not fit to mention the names of any of them in this place, excepting only one, *Joannes Sydlovius*, who, in a book published at *Franeker*, hath professedly avowed and maintained the grossest of them. And yet neither he nor the rest are to be thought any more blameworthy herein than many others that, holding the same premises, have either dissembled or disowned those conclusions which unavoidably follow therefrom, but rather to be commended for their openness, simplicity, and ingenuity, in representing their opinion naked to the world, such as indeed it is, without any veil or mask.

"Wherefore, since there are so many, both philosophers and theologians, that seemingly and verbally acknowledge such things as moral good and evil, just and unjust, yet contend, notwithstanding, that these are not by nature but institution, and that there is nothing naturally or immutably just or unjust; I shall from hence fetch the rise of this ethical discourse or inquiry concerning things good and evil, just and unjust, laudable and shameful, demonstrating, in the first place, that, if there be anything at all good or evil, just or unjust, there must of necessity be something naturally and immutably good and just. And from thence I shall proceed afterward to show what this natural, immutable, and eternal justice is, with the branches and species of it."*

The foregoing very long quotation, while it contains much valuable information with respect to the history of moral science, will be sufficient to convey a general idea of the scope of Cudworth's ethical inquiries, and of the prevailing opinions among philosophers upon this subject, at the time when he wrote. For the details of his argument I must refer to his work. It is sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that he seems plainly to have considered our notions of right and wrong as incapable of analysis, that is, (to use the language of more modern writers,) he considered them as simple ideas or notions, of which the names do not admit of definition. In this respect, also, his philosophy differs from that of Hobbes, who, as we have already remarked, ascribes our moral judgments, not to an immediate perception of the qualities of actions, but to a view of their *tendencies*, which we approve or disapprove, according as they appear to be conducive or not to our own interest, or to that of society. Indeed, according to Hobbes, these two tendencies coincide, or rather are the same, for he apprehended that all our zeal for the public good originates in a selfish principle. "Man," he said, "is driven to society by necessity, and whatever promotes its interest is judged to have a remote tendency to promote his own."† Thus he attempts to

* [*Immutable Morality*, B. I. chap. i. sects. 1-5: abridged.]

† [See *De Corpore Politico* and *Leviathan*, *passim*.]

account for our approbation of virtue by resolving it into self-love, and, of consequence, to resolve the notions expressed by the words *right* and *wrong* into other notions more simple and general. This theory I have already endeavoured to refute at some length, and I have only now to add to what was formerly remarked with respect to it, that, if it were agreeable to fact, the words *right* and *wrong* would be synonymous with *advantageous* and *disadvantageous;* and to say that these actions are right which are calculated to promote our own happiness would be an identical proposition.

Cudworth's opinion, on the contrary, led him to consider our perception of right and wrong as an ultimate fact in our nature. Indeed, to those whose judgments are not warped by preconceived theories, no fact with respect to the human mind can well appear more incontestable. We can define the words right and wrong only by synonymous words and phrases, or by the properties and necessary concomitants of what they denote. Thus,[1] "we may say of the word *right*, that it expresses what we *ought to do*, what is *fair* and *honest*, what is *approvable*, what *every man professes to be the rule of his conduct*, what *all men praise*, and what *is in itself laudable, though no man praise it.*" In such definitions and explanations, it is evident we only substitute a synonymous expression instead of the word defined, or we characterize the quality which the word denotes by some circumstance connected with it, or resulting from it as a consequence; and therefore, we may, with confidence, conclude that the word in question expresses a simple idea.

The two most important conclusions, then, which result from Cudworth's reasonings in opposition to Hobbes are these: First, That the mind is able to form antecedently to positive institution the ideas of right and wrong; and, Secondly, That these words express simple ideas, or ideas incapable of analysis.

From these conclusions of Cudworth a farther question naturally arose, how the ideas of right and wrong were formed, and to what principle of our constitution they ought to be referred? This very interesting question did not escape the

[1] Reid, *On the Active Powers*, p. 228. [Essay III. Part ii. ch. 5.—*Works*, p. 587.]

attention of Cudworth. And, in answer to it, he endeavoured to show that our notions of moral distinctions are formed by *Reason*, or, in other words, by the power which distinguishes truth from falsehood. And accordingly it became, for some time, the fashionable language among moralists to say that virtue consisted, not in obedience to the law of a superior, but in a conduct conformable to reason.

At the time when Cudworth wrote, no accurate classification had been attempted of the principles of the Human Mind. His account of the office of reason, accordingly, in enabling us to perceive the distinction between right and wrong, passed without censure, and was understood merely to imply, that there is an eternal and immutable distinction between right and wrong, no less than between truth and falsehood; and that both these distinctions are perceived by our rational powers, or by those powers which raise us above the brutes.

The publication of Locke's *Essay* introduced into this part of science a precision of expression unknown before, and taught philosophers to distinguish a variety of powers which had formerly been very generally confounded. With these great merits, however, his work has capital defects, and perhaps in no part of it are these defects more important than in the attempt he has made to deduce the origin of our knowledge entirely from *Sensation* and *Reflection*. To the former of these sources he refers the ideas we receive by our external senses,—of colours, sounds, hardness, &c. To the latter, the ideas we derive from consciousness of our own mental operations—of memory, imagination, volition, pleasure, pain, &c. These, according to him, are the sources of all our simple ideas; and the only power that the mind possesses is to perform certain operations of analysis, combination, comparison, &c., on the materials with which it is thus supplied.

It was this system of Locke's which led him to those dangerous opinions that were formerly mentioned concerning the nature of moral distinctions, which he seems to have considered as entirely the offspring of education and fashion. Indeed, if the words *right* and *wrong* neither express simple

ideas, nor relations discoverable by reason, it will not be found easy to avoid adopting this conclusion.

In order to reconcile Locke's account of the origin of our ideas with the immutability of moral distinctions, different theories were proposed concerning the nature of virtue. According to one,[1] for example, it was said to consist in a conduct conformable to *truth;* according to another,[2] in a conduct conformable to the *fitness of things.* The great object of all these theories may be considered as the same, to remove right and wrong from the class of simple ideas, and to resolve moral rectitude into a conformity with some relation perceived by reason or by the understanding.

Dr. Hutcheson saw clearly the vanity of these attempts, and hence he was led, in compliance with the language of Locke's Philosophy, to refer the origin of our moral ideas to a particular power of perception, to which he gave the name of the *Moral Sense.* "All the ideas," says he, "or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate powers of Perception, internal or external, which we may call *Senses.* . . . . Reasoning or Intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or discern the Relations of those received."*

According to this system, as it has been commonly explained, our perceptions of right and wrong are *impressions* which our minds are made to receive from particular actions, similar to the relishes and aversions given us for particular objects of the external and internal senses.

That this was Dr. Hutcheson's own idea appears from the following passage, in which he endeavours to obviate some dangerous notions which were supposed to follow from this doctrine. "Let none imagine that calling the ideas of Virtue and Vice Perceptions of sense, upon apprehending the actions and affections of another, does diminish their reality more than the like assertions concerning all pleasure and pain, happiness, or misery. Our reason often corrects the report of our senses

[1] Mr. Wollaston. [2] Dr. Clarke.

* [*Essay on the Nature of the Passions, &c.—Illustrations upon the Moral Sense,* sect. i. p. 241, 3d edit.]

about the natural tendency of the external action, and corrects rash conclusions about the affections of the agent. But whether our Moral Sense be subject to such a disorder as to have different perceptions, from the same apprehended affections in an agent, at different times, as the eye may have of the colours of an unaltered object, it is not easy to determine; perhaps it will be hard to find any instance of such a change. What reason could correct if it fell into such a disorder, I know not, except suggesting to its remembrance its former approbations, and representing the general sense of mankind. But this does not prove ideas of virtue and vice to be previous to a sense, more than a like correction of the ideas of colour in a person under the jaundice proves that colours are perceived by reason previously to sense."*

Mr. Hume, whose philosophy coincides in this respect with Dr. Hutcheson's, has expressed himself on this subject still more explicitly. "As virtue is an end, and is desirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys, it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches, some internal taste or feeling, or whatever you please to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other."

"To us the distinct boundaries and offices of *reason* and of *taste* are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood; the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition or diminution: the other has a productive faculty, and, gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours borrowed from internal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a new creation. Reason, being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination, by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery. Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is

* [*Illustrations upon the Moral Sense*, sect. iv. p. 288, 3d edit.]

the first spring or impulse to desire and volition. From circumstances and relations, known or supposed, the former leads us to the discovery of the concealed and unknown. After all circumstances and relations are laid before us, the latter makes us feel from the whole a new sentiment of blame or approbation. The standard of the one, being founded on the nature of things, is eternal and inflexible, even by the will of the Supreme Being. The standard of the other, arising from the internal frame and constitution of animals, is ultimately derived from that supreme will which bestowed on each being its peculiar nature, and arranged the several classes and orders of existence."*

In the passage now quoted from Mr. Hume, a slight hint is given of his scepticism with respect to the immutability of moral distinctions; but, in some other parts of his writings, he has openly and avowedly expressed his opinions upon this important question. The words *Right* and *Wrong* (according to him) signify nothing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, any more than the words sweet and bitter, pleasant and painful, but only certain effects in the mind of the spectator. As it is improper, therefore, (according to the doctrines of some modern philosophers,) to say of an object of taste that it is sweet, or of heat that it is in the fire, so it is equally improper to say of actions that they are right or wrong. It is absurd to speak of morality as a thing independent and unchangeable, inasmuch as it arises from an arbitrary relation between our constitution and particular objects. The distinction of moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain which results from the view of any sentiment or character; and, as that pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, it follows that there is just so much vice or virtue in any character as every one places in it; and that it is impossible in this particular we can ever be mistaken.[1]

* [*Essays*, Vol. II. App. I. § 5.]

[1] "Were I not afraid of appearing too philosophical, I should remind my reader of that famous doctrine, supposed to be fully proved in modern times, that tastes and colours, and all other sensible qualities, lie not in the bodies but merely in the senses. The case is the same with beauty and deformity, *virtue and vice*."—Hume's *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*, Vol. I. Note F.

Before we proceed to an examination of these conclusions, it may be worth while to remark, that they have not even the merit of originality; for we find from the Theætetus of Plato, as well as from other remains of antiquity, that the same scepticism prevailed among the Grecian sophists, and was supported by nearly the same arguments. Protagoras and his followers extended it to all truth, physical as well as moral, and maintained that everything was relative to perception. The following maxims, in particular, have a wonderful coincidence with Hume's Philosophy. "Nothing is true or false any more than sweet or sour *in itself*, but relatively to the perceiving mind."—"Man is the measure of all things, and everything is that and no other which to every one it *seems* to be, so that there can be nothing true, nothing existent distinct from the mind's own perceptions." This last indeed is mentioned as the fundamental principle of Protagoras's system. *Πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, τῶν μὲν ὄντων, ὡς ἔστι, τῶν δὲ μὴ ὄντων, ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν. . . . . [Λείπεται . . . τὰ φαινόμενα ἑχάστῳ ταῦτα καὶ εἶναι τούτῳ ᾧ φαίνεται.]*[1]

With respect to this sceptical philosophy as it is taught in the writings of Hume, it appears evidently, from what has been already said, to be founded entirely on the supposition, that our perception of the moral qualities of actions has some analogy to our perception of the sensible qualities of matter; and therefore it becomes a very interesting inquiry for us to examine how far this supposition is agreeable to fact. Indeed this is the most important question that can be stated with respect to the theory of morals; and yet I confess it appears to me that the obscurity in which it is involved arises chiefly, if not wholly, from the use of indefinite and ambiguous terms.

That moral distinctions are perceived by a sense is implied in the definition of a sense already quoted from Dr. Hutcheson, [p. 290.] "All the ideas, or the materials of our reasoning or judging, are received by some immediate powers of Perception, internal or external, which we may call *Senses*. Reasoning or Intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas,

[1] Plato, *Theætetus*, [§§ 23, 39.]

but to discover or discern the Relations of those received." If this definition be admitted, there cannot be a doubt that the origin of our moral ideas must be referred to a sense; at least there can be no doubt upon this point among those who hold, with Cudworth and with Price, that the words right and wrong express simple ideas. The latter of these authors, a most zealous opposer of a moral sense, (and although one of the driest and least engaging of our English moralists, yet certainly one of the most sound and judicious,) grants that the words *right* and *wrong* are incapable of a definition, and considers a want of attention to this circumstance as a principal source of the errors which have misled philosophers in treating of this part of moral science. "'Tis a very necessary previous observation," says he, "that *right and wrong denote simple ideas, and are therefore to be ascribed to some immediate power of perception in the human mind.* He that doubts needs only try to enumerate the simple ideas they signify, or to give definitions of them when applied, (suppose to beneficence or cruelty,) which shall amount to more than synonymous expressions. From not attending to this, from giving definitions of these ideas, and attempting to derive them from *deduction* or *reasoning*, has proceeded most of that confusion in which the question concerning the foundation of morals has been involved. There are, undoubtedly, some actions that are ultimately approved, and for justifying which no reason can be assigned, as there are some ends which are ultimately desired, and for choosing which no reason can be given. Were not this true, there would be an infinite series or progression of reasons and ends subordinate to one another. There would be nothing at which to stop, and therefore nothing that could at all be approved or desired."[1]

It appears from the foregoing passage that Dr. Price, as well as Dr. Hutcheson, ascribes our ideas of moral distinctions to an immediate power of Perception in the mind, and therefore the difference between them turns entirely on the propriety of the definition of a *Sense* which Dr. Hutcheson has given.

[1] Price's *Review*, &c. [Chap. I. sect. iii.]

It may be farther observed, in justification of Dr. Hutcheson, that the sceptical consequences deduced from his supposition of a *Moral Sense*, do not necessarily result from it. Unfortunately, most of his illustrations were taken from the *secondary* qualities of matter, which since the time of Descartes, philosophers have been in general accustomed to refer to the mind, and not to the external object. But if we suppose our perception of right and wrong to be analogous to the perception of extension and figure and other *primary* qualities, the reality and immutability of moral distinctions seem to be placed on a foundation sufficiently satisfactory to a candid inquirer. That our notions of primary qualities are necessarily accompanied with a conviction of their separate and independent existence was formerly shown; and, therefore, to compare our perception of right and wrong to our perception of extension and of figure, although it may not perhaps be very accurate or philosophical, does not imply any scepticism with respect to the immutability of moral distinctions; at least does not justify those sceptical inferences which Mr. Hume has endeavoured to deduce from Dr. Hutcheson's language.

The definition, however, of a Sense which Dr. Hutcheson has given is by far too general, and was plainly suggested to him by Locke's account of the Origin of our ideas. The words Cause and Effect, Duration, Number, Equality, Identity, and many others, express simple ideas as well as the words Right and Wrong; and yet it would surely be absurd to ascribe each of them to a particular power of Perception. Notwithstanding this circumstance, as the expression *Moral Sense* has now the sanction of use, and as, when properly explained, it cannot lead to any bad consequences, it may be still retained without inconvenience in ethical disquisitions. It has been much in fashion among moralists since the time of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, nor was it an innovation introduced by them; for the ancients often speak of a *Sensus Recti et Honesti;* and, in our own language, *a Sense of Duty* is a phrase not only employed by philosophers, but habitually used in common discourse.

To what part of our constitution then shall we ascribe the origin of the ideas of right and wrong? Dr. Price (returning to the antiquated phraseology of Cudworth) says—to the *Understanding;* and endeavours to show, in opposition to Locke and his followers, that "the power which understands, or the faculty that discerns truth, is itself a source of new ideas."*

This controversy turns solely on the meaning of words. The origin of our ideas of Right and Wrong is manifestly the same with that of the other simple ideas already mentioned; and, whether it be referred to the Understanding or not, seems to be a matter of mere arrangement, provided it be granted that the words right and wrong express qualities of actions, and not merely a power of exciting certain agreeable or disagreeable emotions in our minds.

It may perhaps obviate some objections against the language of Cudworth and Price, to remark that the word *Reason* is used in senses which are extremely different: sometimes to express the whole of those powers which elevate man above the brutes, and constitute his rational nature,—more especially, perhaps, his intellectual powers; sometimes to express the power of deduction or argumentation. The former is the sense in which the word is used in common discourse; and it is in this sense that it seems to be employed by those writers who refer to it the origin of our moral ideas. Their antagonists, on the other hand, understand in general, by Reason, the power of deduction or argumentation; a use of the word which is not unnatural, from the similarity between the words reason and reasoning, but which is not agreeable to its ordinary meaning. "No hypothesis," says Dr. Campbell, "hitherto invented hath shown that, by means of the discursive faculty, without the aid of any other mental power, we could ever obtain a notion either of the beautiful or the good."[1] The remark is undoubtedly true; and it may be applied to all those systems which ascribe to *Reason* the origin of our moral ideas, if the expressions reason and discursive faculty be used as synony-

* [*Review*, &c. Chap. I. sect. ii.]

[1] *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Vol. I. p. 204. [Book I. chap. vii. sect. 4. note.]

mous. But if the word Reason be used in a more general sense to denote merely our rational and intellectual nature, there does not seem to be much impropriety in ascribing to it the origin of those simple notions which are not excited in the mind by the immediate operation of the senses, but which arise in consequence of the exercise of the intellectual powers upon their various objects.

A variety of intuitive judgments might be mentioned involving simple ideas, which it is impossible to trace to any origin but to the power which enables us to form these judgments. Thus it is surely an intuitive truth, that the sensations of which I am conscious, and all those I remember, belong to one and the same being, which I call *myself*. Here is an intuitive judgment involving the simple idea of *Identity*. In like manner, the changes which I perceive in the universe impress me with a conviction that some cause must have operated to produce them. Here is an intuitive judgment involving the simple idea of *Causation*. When we consider the adjacent angles made by a straight line standing upon another, and perceive that their sum is equal to two right angles, the judgment we form involves the simple idea of *Equality*. To say, therefore, that Reason, or the Understanding, is a source of new ideas, is not so exceptionable a mode of speaking as has sometimes been supposed. According to Locke, *Sense* furnishes our ideas, and *Reason* perceives their agreements or disagreements; whereas, in point of fact, these agreements or disagreements are in many instances simple ideas, of which no analysis can be given, and of which the origin must therefore be referred to reason, according to Locke's own doctrine.

In speaking of the hypothesis of a *Moral Sense*, I formerly observed that the expression was sanctioned by the example of the ancients. The same authority may be appealed to in justification of the language used by Cudworth and Price, whose ideas on the subject seem indeed to be still more conformable to the spirit of the Greek philosophy. Τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, for example, so much insisted on by Plato and others, was plainly considered by them as the faculty of Reason; τὸ φύσει δεσπο-

τικὸν, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ λογιστικὸν, says Alcinous, *De Doctrina Platonis*.[1] In Plato's *Theætetus*, too, Socrates observes, "that it cannot be any of the powers of sense that compares the perceptions of all the senses, and apprehends the general affections of things, and particularly *identity*, *number*, *similitude*, *dissimilitude*, *equality*, *inequality*, to which he adds, καλὸν καὶ αἰσχρόν; asserting that this power is *reason*, or the soul acting by itself separately from matter, and independently of any corporeal impressions and passions; and that, consequently, in opposition to Protagoras, knowledge is not to be sought for in sense, but in this superior part of the soul. Μοὶ δοκεῖ . . . οὐδ' εἶναι τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν τούτοις ὄργανον ἴδιον, . . . ἀλλ' αὐτὴ δι' αὑτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ κοινά μοι φαίνεται περὶ πάντων ἐπισκοπεῖν. . . . . Ὅμως δὲ τοσοῦτόν γε προβεβήκαμεν ὥστε μὴ ζητεῖν αὐτὴν (ἐπιστήμην) ἐν αἰσθήσει τὸ παράπαν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ ὀνόματι, ὅ τι ποτ' ἔχει ἡ ψυχὴ, ὅταν αὐτὴ καθ' αὑτὴν πραγματεύηται περὶ τὰ ὄντα. It seems to me, that, for the perception of these things, a different organ or faculty is not appointed,[2] but that the soul itself, and in virtue of its own power, observes these general affections of all things. So far we have advanced as to find that knowledge is by no means to be sought in sense, but in the power of the soul which it employs, when within itself it contemplates and searches out truth."[3]

The opinion we form, however, on this point, is of little moment, provided it be granted that the words Right and Wrong express qualities of actions. When I say of an act of justice that it is *right*, do I mean merely that the act excites pleasure in my mind, as a particular colour pleases my eye, in consequence of a relation which it bears to my organ? or do I mean to assert *a truth* which is as independent of my constitution as the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right

[1] Cap. xxviii.

[2] Plato could not have expressed himself with greater precision had he been arguing against Hutcheson's doctrine of a *Moral Sense*.

[3] [§§ 105-108.]—See upon this subject Cudworth's *Immutable Morality*, p. 100, *et seq.*, [Book II. chaps. v. vi.] and Price's *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, p. 50, 2d edit. [Chap. I. sects. ii. iii.]

angles? Scepticism may be indulged in both cases, about mathematical and about moral truth, but in neither case does it admit of a refutation by argument.

For my own part, I can as easily conceive a rational being so formed as to believe the three angles of a triangle to be equal to *one* right angle, as to believe that if he had it in his power it would be *right* to sacrifice the happiness of other men to the gratification of his own animal appetites, or that there would be no *injustice* in depriving an industrious old man of the fruits of his own laborious acquisitions. The exercise of our reason in the two cases is very different; but in both cases we have a perception of *truth*, and are impressed with an irresistible conviction that the truth is immutable and independent of the will of any being whatever.

In the passage which was formerly quoted from Dr. Cudworth, [p. 286,] mention is made of various authors, particularly among the theologians of the scholastic ages, who were led to call in question the immutability of moral distinctions by the pious design of magnifying the perfections of the Deity. I am sorry to observe, that these notions are not as yet completely exploded; and that, in our own age, they have misled the speculations of some writers of considerable genius, particularly of Dr. Johnson, Soame Jenyns, and Dr. Paley. Such authors certainly do not recollect, that what they add to the divine power and majesty, they take away from his moral attributes; for, if moral distinctions be not immutable and eternal, it is absurd to speak of the *goodness* or of the *justice* of God. "Whoever thinks," says Shaftesbury, "that there is a God, and pretends formally to believe that he is *just* and *good*, must suppose that there is independently such a thing as *justice* and *injustice*, *truth* and *falsehood*, *right* and *wrong*, according to which eternal and immutable standards he pronounces that God is *just*, *righteous*, and *true*. If the mere will, decree, or law of God, be said absolutely to constitute *right* and *wrong*, then are these latter words of no signification at all."[1]

[1] *Inquiry concerning Virtue*, [Book I. | Part iii. sect. 2.—[*Characteristics*, Vol. ii. p. 49, edit. 1711.]

In justice, indeed, to one of the writers above-mentioned, (*Dr. Paley,*) it is proper for me to observe, that the objection just now stated has not escaped his attention, and that he has even attempted an answer to it; but it is an answer in which he admits the justness of the inference which we have drawn from his premises; or, in other words, in which he admits, that, to speak of the moral attributes of God, or to say that he is *just*, *righteous*, and *true*, is to employ words which are altogether nugatory and unmeaning. That I may not be accused of misinterpreting the doctrine of this ingenious writer, who on many accounts deserves the popularity he enjoys, I shall quote his own statement of his opinion on this subject.

"Since moral *obligation* depends, as we have seen, upon the will of God, *right*, which is correlative to it, must depend upon the same. Right, therefore, signifies *consistency with the will of God.*"

"But if the Divine will determine the distinction of right and wrong, what else is it but an identical proposition to say of God that he acts *right?* or how is it possible even to conceive that he should act *wrong?* Yet these assertions are intelligible and significant. The case is this: By virtue of the two principles, that God wills the happiness of his creatures, and that the will of God is the measure of right and wrong, we arrive at certain conclusions; which conclusions become rules; and we soon learn to pronounce actions right or wrong, according as they agree or disagree with our rules, without looking farther: and when the habit is once established of stopping at the rules, we can go back and compare with these rules even the Divine conduct itself; and yet it may be true (only not observed by us at the time) that the rules themselves are deduced from the Divine will."*

To this very extraordinary passage (some parts of which I confess I do not completely comprehend, but which plainly gives up the *moral attributes of God* as a form of words that conveys no meaning) I have no particular answer to offer. That it was written with the purest intentions, and from the complete conviction of the author's own mind, I am perfectly satisfied from

* [*Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy,* Book II. chap. ix.]

the general scope of his book, as well as from the strong testimony of the first names in England in favour of the worth of the writer; but it leads to consequences of the most alarming nature, coinciding in every material respect with the systems of those scholastic theologians whom Dr. Cudworth classes with the Epicurean philosophers of old, and whose errors that great and excellent writer has refuted with so splendid a display of learning, and such irresistible force of argument.[1]

May I be permitted to add to these strictures, that it is difficult to explain the following words of Scripture in any other sense than by applying them to such doctrines concerning the factitious origin of moral distinctions as have been now under our review?

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."[2]

SECT. II.—OF THE AGREEABLE AND DISAGREEABLE EMOTIONS ARISING FROM THE PERCEPTION OF WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG IN CONDUCT.

It is impossible to behold a good action without being conscious of a benevolent affection, either of love or of respect, towards the agent; and, consequently, as all our benevolent affections include an agreeable feeling, every good action must be a source of pleasure to the spectator. Besides this, other agreeable feelings, of order, of utility, of peace of mind, &c., come, in process of time, to be associated with the general idea of virtuous conduct.

[1] When Dr. Paley first appeared as an author, his reading on ethical subjects seems to me to have been extremely limited, and to have extended little farther than to the works of that ingenious and well-meaning, but fanciful and superficial writer, Abraham Tucker,* author of *The Light of Nature Pursued*.—(See Dr. Paley's Preface.) The political part of Paley's book, although by no means unexceptionable, displays talents so far superior to the moral, that one would scarcely suppose them to have proceeded from the same pen. To his work on Natural Religion I am happy to be able to give unqualified praise.

[2] *Isaiah* v. 20.

* Mr. Tucker's works were published under the fictitious name of Edward Search, Esq.

Those qualities in good actions which excite agreeable feelings in the mind of the spectator, form what some moralists have called the *Beauty of Virtue.*

All this may be applied *mutatis mutandis*, to explain what is meant by the *Deformity of Vice.*

This view of the moral faculty, which represents it as a species of *taste*, by which we are determined to the love of moral excellence, occurs very frequently in the works of the ancients. But I shall confine myself at present to *one* short quotation from *Cicero.* "Nec vero illa parva vis naturæ est rationisque, quòd unum hoc animal sentit quid sit ordo; quid sit, quod deceat; in factis dictisque qui modus. Itaque eorum ipsorum, *quæ adspectu sentiuntur*, nullum aliud animal pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit; *quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat;* cavetque ne quid indecorè, effeminatève faciat; tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis, ne quid libidinosè aut faciat aut cogitet: quibus ex rebus conflatur et efficitur id, quod quærimus *honestum;* quod, etiam si nobilitatum non sit, tamen honestum sit; quodque verè dicimus, etiam, si à nullo laudetur, naturâ esse laudabile. Formam quidem ipsam, Marce Fili, et tamquam faciem honesti vides; quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientiæ."[1]

The same moralists who have applied to virtue and to vice the epithets I have now been endeavouring to define, have remarked, that, as in natural objects, so also in the conduct and characters of mankind, there are two different species of beauty;—the one what is properly called *beauty* in the more limited and precise acceptation of the term; the other what is properly called *grandeur* or *sublimity.* The former naturally excites love toward the agent, the latter renders him an object of our admiration. To the former class belong the qualities of gentleness, candour, condescension, and humanity. To the latter, magnanimity, fortitude, inflexible justice, self-command,

[1] *De Officiis*, Lib. I. capp. iv. v.

contempt of danger, and contempt of death; those qualities which, as exhibited in the character of *Cato*, formed in the judgment of Seneca a spectacle which Heaven itself might behold with pleasure. "Ecce spectaculum Deo dignum, ad quod respiciat Jupiter, suo operi intentus, vir fortis cum mala fortuna compositus."* Illustrations of this kind abound in those writers who have adopted Shaftesbury's scheme of morals.

Without deciding at present on the propriety of the expressions *moral beauty* and *moral deformity*, it is of consequence for us to remark, that our perception of the qualities which these words are employed to denote is plainly distinguishable from our perception of actions as *right* or *wrong*. The latter involves a judgment with respect to certain attributes of actions, which no more depend on our perception than the primary qualities of body depend on the informations we receive of them by our external senses, or than the distinction between mathematical truth and falsehood depends on the conclusions of our understanding. The words beauty and deformity, on the other hand, have always a reference to the feelings of the spectator; to the delight or uneasiness which particular actions produce on the mind.

Nor are these perceptions distinguishable from each other merely in theory. The distinct operation of each in producing the moral sentiments of mankind is easily discernible by the most superficial observer; for, although they are always in some degree combined together, yet they are not always combined in the same relative proportions. There are some men who, with *Marcus* in the play,[1] at the bare mention of successful iniquity, are

> "Tortured even to madness;"

while others, whose judgments with respect to morality are equally sound, possess that steady and dispassionate temper,

> "Which looks on fraud, rebellion, guilt, and Cæsar,
> In the calm light of mild philosophy."

The rectitude, therefore, of our moral judgments, is by no

* [*De Providentia*, Cap. II.]

[1] Addison's *Cato*.

means to be estimated by the liveliness of the impressions which good or bad actions produce on the mind. Indeed, the same circumstances which contribute to the accuracy of the former have in some respects a tendency to weaken the latter. These, like all other passive impressions, are rendered more languid by custom;[1] whereas constant exercise and a proper application of our intellectual powers in general, are absolutely necessary to guard us against the various errors by which the power of moral judgment is liable to be perverted. The liveliness too of our moral feelings depends much on accidental circumstances; on constitutional temper, on education, on early associations, and, above all, on the culture which the power of imagination has received.

Notwithstanding, however, the reality and importance of this distinction, it has been but little attended to by the greater part of philosophers. The ancients had it in view when they spoke of the *honestum* and the *pulchrum*, τὸ δίκαιον, and τὸ καλόν; but the moderns seem in general to have overlooked it almost entirely, some of them confining their attention exclusively to the one perception, and some to the other. Clarke, for example, and his followers, neglecting the consideration of our moral *feelings*, have treated of this part of our constitution as if it consisted wholly of a power of distinguishing between right and wrong; and hence their works, how satisfactory soever to the understanding, seldom engage the imagination, or interest the heart. Shaftesbury, on the other hand, and his numerous admirers, by dwelling exclusively on our perception of moral beauty and deformity, have been led into enthusiasm and declamation, and have furnished licentious moralists with a pretence for questioning the immutability of moral distinctions. Even Dr. Hutcheson, one of the ablest and most judicious of his disciples, has contented himself with this partial view of our moral constitution. He everywhere describes virtue and vice by the *effects* accompanying the percep-

[1] On farther reflection this proposition seems to me somewhat doubtful. Perhaps it may be found that our moral impressions form a singular exception to this general law of our Constitution.

tion of them, and makes no distinction between the *rectitude* of an action as approved by our *reason*, and its *gratefulness* to the *taste* of the observer, or its aptitude to excite his moral emotions.

Another erroneous conclusion of a very dangerous tendency, has been suggested by the doctrines of Lord Shaftesbury's school. Accustomed to define virtue and vice by their agreeable or disagreeable effects on the mind of the spectator, his followers have been led to extend the meaning of these words far beyond their proper signification; and, as virtue forms always an agreeable, and vice a disagreeable object of contemplation, they have concluded that the converse of the proposition was equally true, and that everything that was agreeable or disagreeable in human character or conduct, might be properly expressed by the words virtue and vice. Accordingly, Hume, proceeding on the same general principles with Hutcheson, has been led to adopt this very conclusion as a fundamental truth in ethics, and even to introduce it into the definition which he gives of *virtue;* "virtue," according to his theory, "consisting in the possession of qualities which are useful or agreeable to ourselves or to others."[1] That this definition is erroneous, is sufficiently evident; for nothing can be plainer than that the words virtue and vice are applicable only to those parts of our character and conduct which depend on our own voluntary exertions. Sensibility, gaiety, liveliness, good humour, natural affection, are a source of pleasure to every beholder, and wherever they are to be found, entitle the possessor to the appellation of *amiable;* but in so far as they result from original constitution, or from external circumstances over which he had no control, they certainly do not render him an object of moral approbation.

A farther inaccuracy in the philosophy of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson has arisen from the same source, the application of the epithets virtuous and vicious to the *affections of the mind.* In order to think with precision on this subject, it is necessary

[1] Hume's *Essays.* London, 1784, vol. ii. p. 319.—[*Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals,* sect. ix., beginning.]

for us always to remember that the object of moral approbation is not *affections* but *actions*. The efforts, indeed, we make to cultivate our amiable affections, are in a high degree meritorious, because the object of the effort is to add to the happiness of those with whom we associate, and because the effort depends upon ourselves; but the merit in such cases does not consist in the affection, but in the efforts by which it has been cultivated.

The result of the remarks now made on the systems of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson amounts to this, that they do not draw the line sufficiently between constitutional good qualities, and those which are voluntary and meritorious. In common discourse, indeed, we frequently apply the word virtue to both, but it is the *last* alone which in strict propriety deserves the name: and, in our own case, it is of great consequence for us to attend to the distinction. In the case of others, as it is impossible for us to draw the line, and as the tendency of our nature is rather to think too unfavourably of our neighbours, it may be the safest rule to consider every action as meritorious which can be supposed, by any reasonable or plausible interpretation, to have probably, or even possibly, proceeded from a virtuous motive. The author of the *Man of Feeling*, [Mr. Henry Mackenzie,] among the many beautiful features in the character of *Harley*, has not failed to remark this candid and amiable disposition. "Her benevolence," he is speaking of his heroine Miss Walton, "was unbounded. Indeed the natural tenderness of her heart might have been argued by the frigidity of a casuist as detracting from her virtue in this respect, for her humanity was a *feeling*, not a *principle*. But minds like Harley's are not very apt to make this distinction, and generally give our virtue credit for all that benevolence which is instinctive in our nature."

In offering these criticisms on the writings of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, I would not be understood to detract from their merits. I am fully sensible of the infinite service they have rendered to this branch of science, by rescuing it from the hands of monks and casuists, and restoring it to its ancient honours. The enthusiasm with which both of them have

painted the charms of moral excellence, while it delights the imagination and exalts the taste, is admirably calculated to lay hold of the generous affections of youth, and to kindle in their breasts the glow of virtue. The *Rhapsody* of Shaftesbury, in particular, whatever the blemishes in point of taste (and they are many) which a *critical* reader may find in it, will remain for ever a monument to the powers of his genius, as well as to the purity and elevation of his mind. It is in general free from the reprehensible sentiments which have given so much just offence in some of his earlier publications, and well merits the encomium which Thomson has bestowed on it in his enumeration of the illustrious names which have adorned the literary history of England.

> "The generous Ashley thine! the friend of man,
> Who scann'd his nature with a brother's eye,
> His weakness prompt to shade; to raise his aim,
> To touch the finer movements of the mind,
> And with the moral beauty charm the heart."*

Still, however, I must again repeat, that it is chiefly on account of their *practical tendency* that I would recommend these two eminent writers; and that, in order to guard ourselves against the cavils of sceptics, it is necessary to look out for a more solid foundation to morality than their philosophy supplies.

I must not leave this subject of *moral beauty*, without taking some notice of a speculation with respect to it, which formed one of the favourite doctrines of the Socratic school, and which Shaftesbury and some other modern writers have attempted to revive. In the observations I have hitherto made, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the words *beauty and sublimity* are applied to actions and characters metaphorically, or from an analogy between the emotions which certain moral qualities and certain material objects produce in the mind. *This*, which is certainly the more obvious and the more common doctrine, seems to have been adopted by Cicero in the passage which I already [p. 302] quoted,—("quam similitudinem natura

* [*Seasons*; Summer, 1550.]

ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in conciliis factisque conservandum putat.") And as the opinion we form concerning it has no connexion with any of the inquiries in which we have just been engaged, I was unwilling to distract the attention by mentioning any other. The philosophers now referred to have adopted a conclusion directly opposite to this, and have maintained that the words beauty and sublimity express, in their *literal* signification, the qualities of mind; and that material objects affect us only by means of the moral ideas they suggest. For my own part I am not prepared to say anything very decided either on the one side or the other, but I must confess that my present views rather incline to the last of these doctrines. The following considerations, in particular, seem to me to have great weight.

It is only in the case of our own minds that we have any direct or immediate knowledge either of intellectual or moral qualities. In the case of other men, we know them only by their external effects; that is, either by the natural signs of intelligence and sentiment which we read in the countenance, or by the information we derive from artificial language, or by the inferences we draw from their conduct and behaviour. To all these external *effects*, but more particularly to the features of the countenance, we apply the epithet of beautiful. But I believe it will be found that this epithet is applicable to them *only*, or at least *chiefly*, in so far as they are *significant*. Into this question, however, when proposed in general terms, I shall not enter; nor shall I take upon me positively to say, that there is no beauty in certain combinations of complexion and features, abstracted from any particular meaning. It is sufficient for my purpose, if it be granted, that the beauty of the human face consists *chiefly* in its expression; and about this it is impossible there can be any controversy. The human face, therefore, it would appear, is beautiful, *chiefly* as it presents to our conceptions the qualities of *mind*.

The same observation is applicable very nearly to the material universe in general. The pleasurable emotions it excites in the

mind of the peasant or mechanic is extremely trifling; but to those whose understandings have received such a degree of cultivation as to be enabled to read in it the characters of power, wisdom, and goodness, how sublime, how beautiful does it appear! Even in the case of particular objects, it may be doubted whether the beauty of order and uniformity does not arise *partly* from some obscure suggestion of design and intelligence. I say *partly*, because, independent of any such considerations, order and uniformity please from the aids they afford to our powers of comprehension and memory. If these observations are well founded, it will follow that it is *mind* alone that possesses *original and underived beauty;* and that what we call the beauty of the material world is chiefly, if not wholly, reflected from intellectual and moral qualities; as the *light* we admire on the disc of the moon and planets is, when traced to its original source, *the light of the sun.* The exclamation, therefore, of the poet in the following lines would appear, notwithstanding the enthusiasm which animates it, to be strictly and philosophically just:—

> "Mind, *Mind* alone! bear witness, Earth and Heaven!
> The living fountains in itself contains,
> Of beauteous and sublime. Here hand in hand
> Sit paramount the graces. Here enthroned
> Celestial Venus, with divinest airs
> Invites the soul to never-fading joy." *

If with these doctrines of the Socratic school we combine the fine and philosophical speculations of Mr. Alison with respect to the effect of *Association*, they will be found to add greatly to the evidence of the general conclusion. Perhaps it may appear to some that the former speculations are resolvable into the latter. This, however, is not the case; for the former relates to *natural signs;* the latter to *arbitrary connexions established in the mind by habit.* In the mind of the philosopher (for example) who traces in the universe the signatures of the Divine perfections, the beauties he contemplates cannot, with propriety, be referred to association, any more than the

* [Akenside, *Pleasures of Imagination*, Book I. 481.]

charms of a beautiful face the first time it is seen. But in a mind conversant with poetry, to which every object in nature recalls a thousand agreeable images, a great part of the pleasing effect must be referred to this source. Even here, however, *association* operates in a manner which illustrates and confirms the general theory, inasmuch as it produces its effect by making objects more *significant* than they were before; or, in other words, by rendering them the occasions of our conceiving intellectual and moral beauties, of which they are not naturally expressive.[1]

Whatever opinion we adopt on this speculative question, there can be no dispute about the fact, that good actions and virtuous characters form the most delightful of all objects to the human mind; and that there are no charms in the external universe so powerful as those which recommend to us the cultivation of the qualities that constitute the perfection and the happiness of our nature.

. . . . . "Is aught so fair
In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn,
In nature's fairest forms,—is aught so fair
As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush
Of him who strives with fortune to be just?
The graceful tear that streams for others' woes?
Or the mild majesty of private life,
Where peace with ever-blooming olive crowns
The gate; where honour's liberal hands effuse
Unenvy'd treasures, and the snowy wings
Of innocence and love protect the scene?
* * * * *
Look then abroad through nature, to the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres,
Wheeling unshaken through the void immense,
And speak, O man! does this capacious scene,
With half that kindling majesty dilate
Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose,
Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,
Amid the crowd of patriots; and his arm

[1] See the profound and eloquent reflections with which Mr. Alison concludes the first chapter of his admirable *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, p. 62, *et seq.*, last edit.

Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country Hail!
For lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
And Rome again is free!" [1]

It is no less evident that these two kinds of *taste*, (that for *natural*, and that for *moral* beauty,) if not ultimately resolvable into the same principles, are at least very nearly allied, or very closely connected; insomuch that every author, who has treated professedly of the one, has been insensibly led to illustrate his subject by frequent references to the other. Hence in poetry the natural and pleasing union of those pictures which recall to us the charms of external nature, and that *moral painting* which affects and delights the heart. The intentions of nature, in thus associating the ideas of the *beautiful* and the *good*, cannot be mistaken. Much, I am persuaded, might be done by a judicious system of education, in following out the plan which nature has herself, in this instance, so manifestly traced; as we find, indeed, *was* done to a very great degree in those ancient schools, who considered it as the most important of all objects to establish such a union between philosophy and the fine arts, as might add to the natural beauty of virtue every attraction which the imagination could give her. Some pleasing illustrations of this idea occur in the poetry of Akenside; and many striking proofs of the practicability of the attempt might be drawn from the examples we daily see of the influence of association in concealing the meanness and deformity of fashionable vices.

In enforcing, indeed, the precepts of practical morality, as well as in conducting the business of general education, the ancients possessed important advantages over us. An unfortunate separation had not then taken place between the active

[1] [Akenside, *Pleasures of Imagination*, Book I. 500, 487.]—Nobly as this scene is painted by Akenside, he has rather weakened, by his amplifications, the effect of the simple narrative of Cicero. "Cæsare interfecto, statim cruentum altè extollens M. Brutus pugionem, Ciceronem nominatim exclamavit, atque ei recuperatam libertatem est gratulatus."—*Philippica*, ii. 12.

and the speculative professions; nor was philosophy understood to be merely a fit subject of declamation and dispute for the period of academical instruction, which the experience of real life was soon to efface from the memory. The teachers of moral truth were men who had been themselves engaged in the important concerns of their country, and who ennobled their precepts by the lustre of their own example; and it was from *their* schools—"warm," as the poet expresses it, "*from the schools of glory*," that the youth entered on the pursuits of business, or the career of ambition. "Magnus ex hoc usus, multum constantiæ, plurimum judicii juvenibus statim contingebat, in media luce studentibus et inter ipsa discrimina." As for us, since the manners of modern Europe have rendered such a plan of education impossible by relegating philosophy to the shade of monastic retirement, what remains but to avail ourselves of the monuments which these illustrious men have left of their genius and of their virtues; and by exhibiting to youth the precepts of ancient wisdom dignified by the splendour of heroic action, to weaken as far as may be those prevailing and fatal prejudices which lead the dissipated and the thoughtless to apprehend, that, in a conscientious regard to moral obligation, there is anything incompatible with an enlightened understanding or a magnanimous spirit! It is fortunate for this purpose that the common system of education in this country, amidst all its defects, by inspiring the tender mind with a warm admiration of classical genius, has a tendency to associate in the imagination the noblest lessons of public and private virtue with all that can captivate the heart or delight the fancy. A judicious selection from the classics directed to this particular object of moral instruction, and cleared of all those erroneous maxims which originate in the peculiar manners and policy of antiquity, or in the superstitious opinions of the heathen world, is still an important *desideratum* in our literature.

It would be improper to bring this subject to a conclusion without mentioning the attempt which Mr. Hume has made to

show, that what we call the Beauty of Virtue is the Beauty of Utility.* For a particular examination and refutation of this opinion I shall refer the reader to Mr. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments.*†

Although, however, Mr. Smith differs from Mr. Hume in thinking that virtue pleases *because* we consider it to be *useful*, he agrees with him that all those qualities which we consider as amiable or agreeable are really useful either to ourselves or to others. In this respect their conclusions coincide with the doctrines of the Socratic school, and afford additional evidence of the beneficent solicitude with which nature allures us to the practice of our duty.

"Do you imagine," says Socrates to Aristippus, "that what is good is not beautiful? Have you not observed that these appearances always coincide? Virtue, for instance, in the same respect as to which we call it good, is ever acknowledged to be beautiful also. In the character we always join the two denominations together.[1] The beauty of human bodies corresponds, in like manner, with that economy of parts which constitutes them good; and in every circumstance of life the same object is constantly accounted both beautiful and good, inasmuch as it answers the purposes for which it was designed."[2]

SECT. III.—OF THE PERCEPTION OF MERIT AND DEMERIT.

The various actions performed by other men not only excite in our minds a benevolent affection towards them, or a disposition to promote their happiness, but impress us with a sense of the merit of the agents. We perceive them to be the proper objects of love and esteem, and that it is morally right that they should receive their reward. We feel ourselves called on to make their worth known to the world, in order to procure

* [*Essays*, Vol. II.—*Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, §§ ii. v.]

† [Part IV. chaps. i. ii.]

[1] Which the Athenians did by the words καλοκάγαθος and καλοκαγαθία.

[2] Xenophontis *Memorabilia*, Lib. III. cap. viii. (The translation is Akenside's.—[In note to *Pleasures of Imagination*, Book I. 374.])

them the favour and respect they deserve; and if we allow it to remain secret we are conscious of injustice in suppressing the natural language of the heart.

On the other hand, when we are witnesses of an act of selfishness, of cruelty, or of oppression, whether we ourselves are sufferers or not, we are not only inspired with aversion and hatred towards the delinquent, but find it difficult to restrain our indignation from breaking loose against him. By this natural impulse of the mind a check is imposed on the bad passions of individuals, and a provision is made even before the establishment of positive laws for the good order of society.

In our own case how delightful are our feelings when we are conscious of doing well? By a species of instinct we know ourselves to be the object of the esteem and attachment of our fellow-creatures, and we feel, with the evidence of a perception, that Heaven smiles on our labours, and that we enjoy the approbation and favour of the invisible witness of our conduct. Hence it is that we not only have a sense of *merit*, but an anticipation of *reward*, and look forward to the future with increased confidence and hope. Nor is this confidence weakened, provided we retain our integrity unshaken by the strokes of adverse fortune, but, on the contrary, we feel it increase in proportion to the efforts that we have occasion to make; and even in the moment of danger and of death it exhorts us to persevere, and assures us that all will be finally well with us. Hence the additional heroism of the brave when they draw the sword in a worthy cause. They feel themselves animated with tenfold strength, relying on the succour of an invisible arm, and seeming to trust, while employed in promoting the beneficent purposes of Providence, "that guardian angels combat on their side." Although, however, this sense of merit which accompanies the performance of good actions convinces the philosopher of the connexion which the Deity has established between virtue and happiness, he does not proceed on the supposition, that on particular occasions miraculous interpositions are to be made in his favour. That virtue is the most direct

road to happiness he sees to be the case even in this world; but he knows that the Deity governs by general laws; and when he feels himself disappointed in the attainment of his wishes, he acquiesces in his lot, and looks forward with hope to futurity. It is an error of the vulgar to expect that good or bad fortune is, *even in this world*, to be the immediate consequence of good or bad actions,—a prejudice of which we may trace the influence in all ages and nations, but more particularly in times of superstition and ignorance. From this error arose the practices of *judicial combat*, and of *trial by ordeal*, both of which formerly prevailed in this part of the world, and of which the latter (as appears from the *Asiatic Researches*) kept its ground in Hindostan as late as 1784,[1] and probably keeps its ground at this day. Absurd as these ideas are, they show strongly how natural to the human mind are the sentiments now under consideration; for this belief of the connexion between *virtue* and *good fortune* has plainly taken its rise from the natural connexion between the ideas of *virtue* and *merit*, a connexion which, we may rest assured, is agreeable to the general laws by which the universe is governed, but which the slightest reflection may satisfy us cannot always correspond with the order of events in such a world as we inhabit at present.

I am not certain but we may trace something of the same kind in the sports of children, who have all a notion that good fortune in their games of chance depends upon perfect *fairness* towards their adversaries, and that those are certain to lose who attempt to take secretly any undue advantage.

[1] "In the code of the Gentoo laws mention is made of the trial by ordeal, which was one of the first laws instituted by Moses among the Jews. (See *Numbers*, chap. v. from the 12th to the 31st verse.) Fire or water were usually employed; but in India the mode varies, and is often determined by the choice of the parties. I remember a letter from a man of rank, who was accused of corresponding in time of war with the enemy, in which he says, 'Let my accuser be produced; let me see him face to face; let the most venomous snakes be put into a pot; let us put our hands into it together; let it be covered for a certain time; and he who remaineth unhurt shall be innocent.'"

"This trial is always accompanied with the solemnities of a religious ceremony."—(Crawford's *Sketches of the Hindoos*, p. 298, edit. of 1790.)

> "Pueri ludentes, Rex eris, aiunt,
> Si rectè facies."[1]

Indeed the moral perceptions (although frequently misapplied in consequence of the weakness of reason and the want of experience) may be as distinctly traced in the mind at that time of life as ever afterwards, when surely it cannot be supposed that they are the result, as some authors have held, of a conviction, founded on actual observation, of the *utility* of virtue.

I shall conclude this subject with again recalling to the attention of the reader a very remarkable fact formerly stated, [p. 222,] that our moral emotions seem to be stronger with respect to the conduct of others than our own. A man who can be guilty, apparently without remorse, of the most flagrant injustice, will yet feel the warmest indignation against a similar act of injustice in another; and the best of men know it to be in many cases a useful rule, before they determine on any particular conduct, to consider how they would judge of the conduct of another in the same circumstances. "Do to others as ye would that they should do unto you." This is owing to the influence of self-partiality and self-deceit. Mr. Smith has been so much struck with the difference of our moral judgments in our own case and in that of another, that he has concluded conscience to be *only* an application to ourselves of those rules which we have collected, from observing our feelings in cases in which we are not personally concerned.* I shall afterwards state some objections to which this opinion is liable.

Were it not for the influence of self-deceit, it could hardly happen that a man should habitually act in direct opposition to his moral principles. We know, however, that this is but too frequently the case. The most perfect conviction of the obligation of virtue, and the strongest moral feelings, will be of little use in regulating our conduct, unless we are at pains to attend constantly to the state of our own character, and to scrutinize with the most suspicious care the motives of our

[1] Horatii *Epistolæ*. Lib. I. Ep. i. 59.

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments;* especially, Part III. chap. iii., and Part I. sect. i. chaps. 3, 4.]

actions. Hence the importance of the precept so much recommended by the moralists of all ages,—"know yourself."

These observations may convince us still more of the truth of what I have elsewhere remarked with respect to *sentimental reading*, and of its total insufficiency for forming a virtuous character without many other precautions.[1] Where its effects are corrected by habits of business, and every instance of conduct is *brought home* by the reader to himself, it may be a source of solid improvement; for although strong moral feelings do by no means alone constitute virtue, yet they add to the satisfaction we derive from the discharge of our duty, and they increase the interest we take in the prosperity of virtue in the world.

[1] *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. I. [Chap. vii. sect. 5.—*Works*, Vol. II pp. 465, 466.]

CHAPTER VI.

OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

According to some systems, moral obligation is founded entirely on our belief that virtue is enjoined by the command of God. But how, it may be asked, does this belief impose an obligation? Only one of two answers can be given. Either that there is a moral fitness that we should conform our will to that of the Author and the Governor of the universe; or that a rational self-love should induce us, from motives of prudence, to study every means of rendering ourselves acceptable to the Almighty Arbiter of happiness and misery. On the first supposition we reason in a circle. We resolve our sense of moral obligation into our sense of religion, and the sense of religion into that of moral obligation.

The other system, which makes virtue a mere matter of prudence, although not so obviously unsatisfactory, leads to consequences which sufficiently invalidate every argument in its favour. Among others it leads us to conclude, 1. That the disbelief of a future state absolves from all moral obligation, excepting in so far as we find virtue to be conducive to our present interest. 2. That a being independently and completely happy, cannot have any moral perceptions or any moral attributes.

But farther, the notions of reward and punishment presuppose the notions of right and wrong. They are sanctions of virtue, or additional motives to the practice of it, but they suppose the existence of some previous obligation.

In the last place, if moral obligation be constituted by a regard to our situation in another life, how shall the existence of

a future state be proved, or even rendered probable by the light of nature? or how shall we discover what conduct is acceptable to the Deity? The truth is, that the strongest presumption for such a state is deduced from our natural notions of right and wrong; of merit and demerit; and from a comparison between these and the general course of human affairs.

It is absurd, therefore, to ask *why* we are bound to practise virtue. The very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation. Every being who is conscious of the distinction between right and wrong, carries about with him a law which he is bound to observe, notwithstanding he may be in total ignorance of a future state. "What renders obnoxious to punishment," as Dr. Butler has well remarked, "is not the foreknowledge of it, but merely the violating a known obligation." Or, (as Plato has expressed the same idea,) τὸ μὲν ὀρθὸν νόμος ἐστὶ βασιλικός.[1]

From what has been stated, it follows that the moral faculty, considered as an active power of the mind, differs essentially from all the others hitherto enumerated. The least violation of its authority fills us with remorse. On the contrary, the greater the sacrifices we make in obedience to its suggestions, the greater are our satisfaction and triumph.

The supreme authority of conscience, although beautifully described by many of the ancient moralists, was not sufficiently attended to by modern writers, as a fundamental principle in the science of ethics, till the time of Dr. Butler. Too little stress is laid on it by Lord Shaftesbury; and the omission is the chief defect in his system of morals. Shaftesbury's opinion, however, although he does not state it explicitly in his *Inquiry*, seems to have been precisely the same at bottom with that of Butler.[2]

With respect to Dr. Butler, I shall take this opportunity of remarking, that in his *Sermons on Human Nature*, in the *Preface* to his *Sermons*, and in a short *Dissertation on Virtue* annexed to his *Analogy*, he has, in my humble opinion, gone farther towards a just explanation of our moral constitution than

[1] *Minos*, [§ 9.]

[2] See his *Advice to an Author*, Part I. sect. ii. paragraphs first and second. —[*Characteristics*, Vol. I. p. 168, *seq.*, ed. 1711.]

any other modern philosopher. Without aiming at the praise of novelty or of refinement, he has displayed singular penetration and sagacity in availing himself of what was sound in former systems, and in supplying their defects. He is commonly considered as an uninteresting and obscure writer: but, for my own part, I never could perceive the slightest foundation for such a charge; though I am ready to grant that he pays little attention to the graces of composition, and that the construction of his sentences is frequently unskilful and unharmonious. As to the charge of obscurity, which he himself anticipated from the nature of his subject, he has replied to it in the most satisfactory manner in the preface already referred to. I think it proper to add, that I would by no means propose these sermons (which were originally preached before the learned Society of Lincoln's Inn) as models for the pulpit. I consider them merely in the light of philosophical essays. In the same volume with them, however, are to be found some practical and characteristical discourses, which are peculiarly interesting and impressive, particularly the sermons *On Self-deceit*, and *On the Character of Balaam;* both of which evince an intimate acquaintance with the springs of human action, rarely found in union with speculative and philosophical powers of so high an order. The chief merit, at the same time, of Butler as an ethical writer, undoubtedly lies in what he has written on the *Supreme Authority of Conscience* as the governing principle of human conduct, —a doctrine which he has placed in the strongest and happiest lights; and which, before his time, had been very little attended to by the moderns. It is sometimes alluded to by Lord Shaftesbury, but so very slightly, as almost to justify the censure which Butler bestows on this part of his writings.

The scope of Butler's own reasonings may be easily conceived from the passage of Scripture which he has chosen as the ground-work of his argument: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves."*

* [*Romans* ii. 14. The sermon referred to, touching Conscience, is the second of those *Upon Human Nature.*]

One of the clearest and most concise statements of this doctrine that I have met with, is in a sermon *On the Nature and Obligations of Virtue*, by Dr. Adams of Oxford; the justness of whose ideas on this subject makes it the more surprising that his pupil and friend, Dr. Samuel Johnson, should have erred so very widely from the truth. "*Right*," says he, "implies *duty* in its idea. To perceive an action to be right, is to see a reason for doing it in the action itself, abstracted from all other considerations whatever; and this perception, this acknowledged rectitude in the action, is the very essence of obligation, that which commands the approbation and choice, and binds the conscience of every rational human being." . . . "Nothing can bring us under an obligation to do what appears to our moral judgment *wrong*. It may be supposed our interest to do this, but it cannot be supposed our duty. For, I ask, if some power, which we are unable to resist, should assume the command over us, and give us laws which are unrighteous and unjust, should we be under an obligation to obey him? Should we not rather be obliged to shake off the yoke, and to resist such usurpation, if it were in our power? However, then, we might be swayed by hope or fear, it is plain that we are under an obligation to *right*, which is antecedent, and in order and nature superior to all other. Power may compel, interest may bribe, pleasure may persuade, but reason only can oblige. This is the only authority which rational beings can own, and to which they owe obedience."

Dr. Clarke has expressed himself nearly to the same purpose. "The judgment and conscience of a man's own mind concerning the *reasonableness and fitness* of the thing is the truest and formallest obligation; for whoever acts contrary to this sense and conscience of his own mind is necessarily *self-condemned;* and the greatest and strongest of all obligations is that which a man cannot break through without condemning himself. So far, therefore, as men are conscious of what is *right* and *wrong*, so far they are under an obligation to act accordingly."*

* [*Works*, (folio edition,) Vol. II. p. 614; *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, under Prop. i.]

I would not have quoted so many passages in illustration of a point which appears to myself so very obvious, if I had not been anxious to counteract the authority of some eminent writers who have lately espoused a very different system, by showing how widely they have departed from the sound and philosophical views of their predecessors. I confess, too, I should have distrusted my own judgment, if, on a question so interesting to human happiness, and so open to examination, I had been led, by any theoretical refinements, to a conclusion which was not sanctioned by the concurrent sentiments of other impartial inquirers. The fact, however, is, that as this view of human nature is the most simple, so it is the most ancient which occurs in the history of moral science. It was the doctrine of the Pythagorean school, as appears from a fragment of *Theages*, a Pythagorean writer, published in Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica*.[1] It is also explained by Plato in some of his dialogues, in which he compares the soul to a commonwealth, and *reason* to the council of state, which governs and directs the whole.

Cicero has expressed the same system very clearly and concisely. "Duplex enim est vis animorum atque naturæ. Una pars in appetitu posita est, (quæ est ὁρμὴ Græce,) quæ hominem huc et illuc rapit; altera in ratione, quæ docet et explanat, quid faciendum fugiendumve sit. Ita fit ut ratio præsit, appetitus obtemperet."* In the following passage this doctrine is enforced in a manner peculiarly sublime and impressive.

"Est quidem vera *Lex*, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat. . . . Nec erit alia Lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus. Ille hujus legis inventor, disceptator, lator. Cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturam hominis aspernabitur; atque

[1] *Opuscula Mythologica Physica et Ethica*. Amstel. 1688, p. 688, *et seq.* [The fragment of Theages, as are all the other Pythagorean fragments collected by Gale, is spurious. See above, p. 105.—*Ed.*]

* [*De Officiis*, Lib. I. cap. xxviii.]

hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiamsi cætera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit."[1]

It is very justly observed by Mr. Smith, (and I consider the remark as of the highest importance,) that "if the distinction pointed out in the foregoing quotations between the moral faculty and our other active powers be acknowledged, it is of the less consequence what particular theory we adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas." And accordingly, though he resolves moral approbation ultimately into *a feeling of the mind*, he nevertheless represents the supremacy of conscience as a principle which is equally essential to all the different systems that have been proposed on the subject. "Upon whatever we suppose our moral faculties to be founded," I quote his own words, "whether upon a certain modification of reason, upon an original instinct called a moral sense, or upon some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted that they are given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of their authority, which denote that they were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions; to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites; and to judge how far each of them was to be either indulged or restrained. Our moral faculties are by no means, as some have pretended, upon a level in this respect with the other faculties and appetites of our nature, endowed with no more right to restrain these last, than these last are to restrain them. No other faculty or principle of action judges of any other. Love does not judge of resentment, nor resentment of love. Those two passions may be opposite to one another, but cannot, with any propriety, be said to approve or disapprove of one another. But it is the peculiar office of those faculties now under consideration to judge, to bestow censure or applause upon all the other principles of our nature."[2] . . . . .

"Since these, therefore," continues Mr. Smith, "were plainly intended to be the governing principles of human nature, the

[1] Fragmentum *De Republica*, Lib. III.

[2] *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Vol. I. p. 410, 6th Edit. [Part III. chap. v.]

rules which they prescribe are to be regarded as the commands and laws of the Deity promulgated by those vicegerents which he has thus set up within us. . . . . By acting according to their dictates we may be said, in some sense, to co-operate with the Deity, and to advance, as far as in our power, the plan of Providence. By acting otherwise, on the contrary, we seem to obstruct, in some measure, the scheme which the Author of Nature has established for the happiness and perfection of the world, and to declare ourselves in some measure the enemies of God. Hence we are naturally encouraged to hope for his extraordinary favour and reward in the one case, and to dread his vengeance and punishment in the other.[1]

I have only to add farther on this subject at present, that the supreme authority of conscience is felt and tacitly acknowledged by the worst no less than by the best of men; for even they who have thrown off all hypocrisy with the world are at pains to conceal their real character from their own eyes. No man ever, in a soliloquy or private meditation, avowed to himself that he was a villain; nor do I believe that such a character as Joseph in the *School for Scandal* (who is introduced as reflecting coolly on his own knavery and baseness, without any uneasiness but what arises from the dread of detection) ever existed in the world. Such men, probably, impose on themselves fully as much as they do upon others. Hence the various artifices of self-deceit which Butler has so well described in his discourses on that subject.

"We may defend villany," says Lord Shaftesbury, "and cry up folly before the world. But to appear fools, madmen, or varlets *to ourselves*, and prove it to our own faces that we are really such, is insupportable. For so true a reverence has every one for himself when he comes clearly to appear before his close companion, that he had rather profess the vilest things of himself in open company than hear his character privately from his own mouth. So that we may readily from hence conclude, that the chief interest of ambition, avarice, corruption, and every sly insinuating vice, is to prevent this interview

[1] *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Vol. I. pp. 412-415. [Part III. chap. v.]

and familiarity of discourse which is consequent upon close retirement and inward recess."[1]

Somewhat to the same purpose it is remarked by a late lively and ingenious, though eccentric writer, (Soame Jenyns,) that "men's opinions much oftener proceed from their actions than their actions from their opinions. They act first, and then with great facility reconcile their principles to their conduct; for which reason we find many whom no advantage can induce to do anything which appears to them wrong, but of that many very few who can ever be convinced that anything is wrong from which either pleasure or profit accrues to themselves."*

It is hardly necessary for me to observe, that there is no merit in our moral perceptions but in acting agreeably to them. We commonly, indeed, and justly consider the want of them as a mark of depravity, because we proceed on the supposition that every man has received them from nature, and that it is only by habits of profligacy that they can be eradicated.

How powerful their influence is over the mind appears remarkably from the general taste for moral novels and for tragedy, and from the enthusiastic rapture with which virtuous sentiments from the stage are uniformly received. "I am a man, and feel an interest in all mankind." (Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.) It is said by St. Augustine, that at the delivery of this sentiment the whole Roman theatre resounded with applause.[2] We may venture to say that a similar sentiment, well pronounced by an actor, would at this day, in the most corrupted capital in Europe, be followed by a similar burst of sympathetic emotion.

. . . "Voyez à nos spectacles
Quand on peint quelque trait de candeur, de bonté,
Où brille en tout son jour la tendre humanité,

[1] Shaftesbury's *Advice to an Author*, Part I. sect. 2.

* [*View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*, 1776.]

[2] See a Note on this line in Colman's translation of the *Self-Tormentor* of Terence. [Colman is of the few annotators upon Terence who have taken note of St. Austin's testimony. This (*e.g.*) is omitted by all the commentators in the ample edition of Westerhovius.— See *Elements*, Vol. III. (*Works*, Vol. IV.) pp. 169, 170.—*Ed.*]

> Tous les cœurs sont remplis d'une volupté pure,
> *Et c'est là qu'on entend le cri de la nature.*"[1]

"On such occasions," as a late writer remarks, "though we may think meanly of the genius of the poet, it is impossible not to think, and to be happy in thinking, highly of the people; —the people whose opinions may often be folly, whose conduct may sometimes be madness, but whose sentiments are almost always honourable and just;—the people whom an author may delight with bombast, may amuse with tinsel, may divert with indecency, but whom he cannot mislead in principle, nor harden into humanity. It is only the mob in the side-boxes, who, in the coldness of self-interest, or the languor of out-worn dissipation, can hear unmoved the sentiments of compassion, of generosity, or of virtue."[2]

[1] *Le Méchant*, Comédie de Gresset.—[See *Works*, above, Vol. IV. p. 170.]

[2] *Account of the German Theatre*, by Henry Mackenzie, Esq. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, Vol. II. Part ii. p. 174.

CHAPTER VII.

OF CERTAIN PRINCIPLES WHICH CO-OPERATE WITH OUR MORAL POWERS IN THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE CONDUCT.

In order to secure still more completely the good order of society, and to facilitate the acquisition of virtuous habits, nature has superadded to our moral constitution a variety of auxiliary principles, which sometimes give rise to a conduct agreeable to the rules of morality, and highly useful to mankind, where the merit of the individual, considered as a moral agent, is inconsiderable. Hence some of them have been confounded with our moral powers, or even supposed to be of themselves sufficient to account for the phenomena of moral perception, by authors whose views of human nature have not been sufficiently comprehensive. The most important principles of this description, are, 1*st*, A regard to Character. 2*d*, Sympathy. 3*d*, The Sense of the Ridiculous. And, 4*th*, Taste. The principle of Self-love (which was treated of in a former section) co-operates very powerfully to the same purposes.

SECT. I.—OF DECENCY, OR A REGARD TO CHARACTER.

Upon this subject I had formerly occasion to offer various remarks in treating of *the desire of esteem*. But the view of it which I then took was extremely general, as I did not think it necessary for me to attend to the distinction between Intellectual and Moral qualities. There can be no doubt that a regard to the good opinion of our fellow-creatures has great influence in prompting our exertions to cultivate both the one and the

other; but what we are more particularly concerned to remark at present, is the effect which this principle has in strengthening our virtuous habits, and in restraining those passions which a sense of duty alone would not be sufficient to regulate.

I before observed, that the desire of esteem operates in children before they have a capacity of distinguishing right from wrong; and that the former principle of action continues for a long time to be much more powerful than the latter. Hence it furnishes a most useful and effectual engine in the business of education, more particularly by training us early to exertions of self-command and self-denial. It teaches us, for example, to restrain our appetites within those bounds which *delicacy* prescribes, and thus forms us to habits of moderation and temperance. And although our conduct cannot be denominated virtuous, so long as a regard to the opinion of others is our sole motive, yet the habits we thus acquire in infancy and childhood render it more easy for us to subject our passions to reason and conscience as we advance to maturity. The subject well deserves a more ample illustration; but at present it is sufficient to recall these remarks to the recollection of the reader.

SECT. II.—OF SYMPATHY.

That there is an exquisite pleasure annexed by the constitution of our nature to the sympathy or fellow-feeling of other men with our joys and sorrows, and even with our opinions, tastes, and humours, is a fact obvious to vulgar observation. It is no less evident that we feel a disposition to accommodate the state of our own minds to that of our companions, wherever we feel a benevolent affection towards them, and that this accommodating temper is in proportion to the strength of our affection. In such cases sympathy would appear to be grafted on benevolence; and perhaps it might be found, on an accurate examination, that the greater part of the pleasure which sympathy yields is resolvable into that which arises from the exercise of kindness, and from the consciousness of being beloved.

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The phenomena generally referred to *sympathy* have appeared to Mr. Smith so important, and so curiously connected, that he has been led to attempt an explanation from this single principle of all the phenomena of moral perception. In this attempt, however, (abstracting entirely from the vague use which he occasionally makes of the word,) he has plainly been misled, like many eminent philosophers before him, by an excessive love of simplicity; and has mistaken a very subordinate principle in our moral constitution (or rather a principle *superadded* to our moral constitution as an auxiliary to the sense of duty) for that faculty which distinguishes right from wrong, and which (by what name soever we may choose to call it) recurs on us constantly in all our ethical disquisitions, as an ultimate fact in the nature of man.

I shall take this opportunity of offering a few remarks on this most ingenious and beautiful theory, in the course of which I shall have occasion to state all that I think necessary to observe concerning the place which *sympathy* seems to me really to occupy in our moral constitution. In stating these remarks, I would be understood to express myself with all the respect and veneration due to the talents and virtues of a writer, whose friendship I regard as one of the most fortunate incidents of my life, but, at the same time, with that entire freedom which the importance of the subject demands, and which I know that his candid and liberal mind would have approved.

In addition to the incidental strictures which I have already hazarded on Mr. Smith's theory, I have yet to state two objections of a more general nature, to which it appears to me to be obviously liable. But before I proceed to these objections, it is necessary for me to premise (which I shall do in Mr. Smith's words) a remark which I have not hitherto had occasion to mention, and which may be justly regarded as one of the most characteristical principles of his system.

"Were it possible," says he, "that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his

own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All these are objects which he cannot easily see, which naturally he does not look at, and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with, which always mark when they enter into, and when they disapprove of his sentiments, and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind."*

To this account of the origin of our moral sentiments it may be objected, 1*st*, That granting the proposition to be true, "that a human creature who should grow up to manhood without any communication with his own species, could no more think of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face," it would by no means authorize the conclusion which is here deduced from it. The necessity of social intercourse as an indispensable condition implied in the generation and growth of our moral sentiments, does not arise merely from its effect in holding up a mirror for the examination of our own character, but from the impossibility of finding, in a solitary state, any field for the exercise of our most important moral duties. In such a state the moral faculty would inevitably remain dormant and useless, for the same reason that the organ of sight would remain useless and unknown to a person who should pass his whole life in the darkness of a dungeon.

2*d*, It may be objected to Mr. Smith's theory, that it confounds the *means* or *expedients* by which nature enables us to correct our moral judgments, with the principles in our constitution to which our moral judgments owe their origin. These means or expedients he has indeed described with singular penetration and sagacity, and by doing so, has thrown new and

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part III. chap. i. *sub initio*.]

most important lights on *practical* morality ; but, after all his reasonings on the subject, the metaphysical problem concerning the primary sources of our moral ideas and emotions, will be found involved in the same obscurity as before. The intention of such expedients, it is perfectly obvious, is merely to obtain a just and fair view of circumstances; and after this view has been obtained, the question still remains, what constitutes the obligation upon me to act in a particular manner? In answer to this question it is said, that, from recollecting my own judgments in similar cases in which I was concerned, I infer in what light my conduct will appear to society; that there is an exquisite satisfaction annexed to mutual sympathy; and that, in order to obtain this satisfaction, I accommodate my conduct, not to my own feelings, but to those of my fellow-creatures. Now, I acknowledge, that this may account for a man's assuming the appearance of virtue, and I believe that something of this sort is the real foundation of the rules of good breeding in polished society;[1] but in the important concerns of life, I apprehend there is something more,—for when I have once satisfied myself with respect to the conduct which an impartial judge would approve of, I feel that this conduct is *right* for me, and that I am under a moral obligation to put it in practice. If I had had recourse to no expedient for correcting my first judgment, I would, nevertheless, have formed some judgment or other of a particular conduct as right, wrong, or indifferent, and the only difference would have been, that I should probably have decided improperly, from an erroneous or a partial view of the case.

From these observations I conclude, that the words *right* and *wrong*,[2] *ought* and *ought not*, express simple ideas or notions,

[1] This remark I borrow from Dr. Beattie, who, in his *Essay on Truth*, observes, that "the foundation of good breeding is that kind of sensibility or sympathy by which we suppose ourselves in the situation of others, adopt their sentiments, and in a manner perceive their very thoughts." (P. 38, 2d edit. Edin. 1771.) The observation well deserves to be prosecuted.

[2] Dr. Hutcheson, in his *Illustrations on the Moral Sense*, calls *ought* a *confused word:* "As to that confused word *ought*," &c. &c. (end of Section I.) But for this he seems to have had no better reason than the impossibility of defining

of which no explanation can be given. They are to be found in all languages, and it is impossible to carry on any ethical speculation without them. Of this Mr. Smith himself furnishes a remarkable proof in the statement of his theory, not only by the occasional use which he makes of these and other synonymous expressions, but by his explicit and repeated acknowledgments, that the propriety of action cannot be always determined by the *actual* judgments of society, and that, in such cases, we must act according to the judgments which other men *ought* to have formed of our conduct. Is not this to admit, that we have a standard of right and wrong in our own minds, of superior authority to any instinctive propensity we may feel to obtain the sympathy of our fellow-creatures?

It was in order to reconcile this acknowledgment with the general language of his system, that Mr. Smith was forced to have recourse to the supposition of "*an abstract man* within the breast, the representative of mankind and substitute of the Deity, whom nature has constituted the supreme judge of all our actions."[1] Of this very ingenious fiction he has availed himself in various passages of the *first* edition [in fact, in the *first five* editions,*] of his book; but he has laid much greater stress upon it in the *last* [or *sixth**] edition, published a short time before his death.[2] An idea somewhat similar occurs in Lord Shaftesbury's *Advice to an Author*, where he observes, with that quaintness of phraseology which so often deforms his otherwise beautiful style, that "when the wise ancients spoke of a demon, genius, or angel, to whom we are committed from the moment of our birth, they meant no more than enigmatically to declare, 'That we have each of us a *patient* in our-

it logically. And may not the same remark be applied to the words *time, space, motion*? Was there ever a language in which these words, together with those of *ought* and *ought not*, were not to be found? *Ought* corresponds with the δεῖ of the Greeks, and the *oportet* and *decet* of the Latins.

[1] Page 208, [3d and] 5th edit. [Part III. chap. ii.]

* [*Editor.*]

[2] See, in particular, Vol. I. p. 321, *et seq.*, 6th edit. [The paragraph beginning, "But though man," &c., Part III. chap. ii. *Of Duty*. Compare, indeed, that whole chapter, in the sixth or subsequent, with that in the fifth or previous editions.—*Ed.*]

selves: that we are properly our own subjects of practice: and that we then become due practitioners, when, by virtue of an intimate recess, we can discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide ourselves into two parties.'" He afterwards tells us, that, "according as this recess was deep and intimate, and the dual number practically formed in us, we were supposed by the ancients to advance in morals and true wisdom."*

By means of this fiction Mr. Smith has rendered his theory (contrary to what might have been expected from its first aspect) perfectly coincident in its practical tendency with that cardinal principle of the Stoical philosophy which exhorts us to search for the rules of life, not *without* ourselves, but *within*: "Nec te quæsiveris extra."† Indeed Butler himself has not asserted the authority and supremacy of conscience in stronger terms than Mr. Smith, who represents this as a manifest and unquestionable principle, whatever particular theory we may adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas. It is only to be regretted, that, instead of the metaphorical expression of "*the man within the breast*, to whose opinions and feelings we find it of more consequence to conform our conduct than to those of the whole world," he had not made use of the simpler and more familiar words *reason* and *conscience*. This mode of speaking was indeed suggested to him, or rather obtruded on him by the theory of sympathy, and nothing can exceed the skill and the taste with which he has availed himself of its assistance in perfecting his system; but it has the effect, with many readers, of keeping out of view the real state of the question, and (like Plato's *Commonwealth of the Soul, and Council of State*) to encourage among inferior writers a figurative or allegorical style in treating of subjects which, more than any other, require all the simplicity, precision, and logical consistency of which language is susceptible.[1]

* [Sect. ii., near the beginning.]

† [Persius, *Sat.* i. 7.]

[1] See Note C.

SECTION III.—OF THE SENSE OF THE RIDICULOUS.

Another auxiliary principle to the moral faculty yet remains to be considered,—*the Sense of Ridicule*, and the anxiety which all men feel to avoid whatever is likely to render them the objects of it. The subject is extremely curious and interesting; but the time I have bestowed on the former article obliges me to confine myself to a very short explanation of the meaning of the word, and of the relation which the principle denoted by it bears to our nobler motives of action.

The natural and proper object of ridicule is those smaller improprieties in character and manners which do not rouse our feelings of moral indignation, or impress us with a melancholy sense of human depravity. In the words of Aristotle, the γελοῖον, or the ridiculous, may be defined to be *αἶσχος ἀνώδυνον*, the deformed without hurt or mischief, or (as he has explained his own meaning) "those smaller faults which are neither painful nor pernicious, but *unbeseeming*;" and "of which," he adds, [had previously said,] "the proper correction is not *reproach*, but *laughter*."*

In stating this as a general principle with respect to the ridiculous, I would not be understood to assert that everything which is ridiculous implies *immorality*, in the strict acceptation of that word. Ignorance, absurdity in reasoning, even a want of acquaintance with the established ceremonial of behaviour, often provoke our laughter with irresistible force. What is ridiculous, however, always implies some imperfection, and exposes the individual to whom it attaches to a species of contempt, of which (how good-humoured soever) no man would choose to be the object.

Perhaps, indeed, it might be found, on a more accurate analysis of this part of our constitution, that it is not, in such cases, merely the *intellectual* or *physical* defect which excites our ridicule, but the contrast between these and *some moral impropriety or imperfection*, which either conceals the defect from

* [*Poetica*, §§ 11, 8; ed. Tyrwhitti; *vulgo* cap. v.]

the individual himself, or induces him to attempt concealing it from others; and consequently, that the sentiment of ridicule always involves, more or less, a sentiment of moral disapprobation. One thing is certain, that intellectual and physical imperfections never appear *so* ridiculous as when accompanied with affectation, hypocrisy, vanity, pride, or an obvious incongruity between the pretensions of an individual and the education he has received, or the station in which he was originally placed.

Upon this question, however, I shall not at present presume to decide. It is sufficient for my purpose, if it be granted that nothing is ridiculous but what falls short, some way or other, of our ideas of excellence; or, as Cicero expresses it, "Locus et regio quasi ridiculi, turpitudine et deformitate quadam continetur."[1]

Hence, I think, may be traced a beautiful *final cause* in this part of our frame. For while it enlarges the fund of our enjoyment, by rendering the more trifling imperfections of our fellow-creatures a source of *amusement* to us,[2] it excites the exertions of every individual to correct those imperfections by which the ridicule of others is likely to be provoked. As our eagerness, too, to correct these imperfections may be presumed to be weak, in proportion as we apprehend them to be, *in a moral view*, of trifling moment; we are so formed, that the painful feelings produced by ridicule, are often more poignant than those arising from the consciousness of having rendered ourselves the objects of strong moral disapprobation. Even the consciousness of being *hated* by mankind, is to the generality of men less intolerable than what the poet calls,

> . . . "The world's *dread laugh*,
> Which scarce the firm Philosopher can scorn."

It furnishes no objection to these observations, that the sense of ridicule is not always favourable to virtuous conduct; and

[1] *De Oratore*, Lib. II. cap. lviii.

[2] Gresset has expressed the same idea with a humorous and happy extravagance:

"Les sots sont ici-bas pour nos menus plaisirs.'

that it frequently tends very powerfully to mislead us from our duty. The same remark may be extended to *the desire of esteem*, and even to *the moral faculty*,—that they are liable to be perverted by education and fashion. But the great ends of our being are to be collected from the *general scope* of the principles of our constitution; not from the particular instances in which this scope is thwarted by adventitious circumstances: and nothing surely can be more evident than this, that the three principles just mentioned were all intended to co-operate together, and to lead to a conduct favourable to the improvement of the individual, and to the general interests of society.

The sense of ridicule, in particular, although it has a manifest reference to such a scene of imperfection as we are placed in at present, is, on the whole, a most important auxiliary to our sense of duty, and well deserves a careful examination in an analysis of the moral constitution of man. It is one of the most striking characteristics of the human constitution, as distinguished from that of the lower animals, and has an intimate connexion with the highest and noblest principles of our nature. As Milton has observed,

> . . . . "Smiles from *reason* flow,
> To brutes denied:"

And it may be added, that they not only imply the power of *reason*, in the more limited acceptation of that word, as applicable to the perception of truth and falsehood; but the moral faculty, or that power by which we distinguish *right* from *wrong*. Indeed, they imply the power of *reason* (in both acceptations of the term) in a high state of cultivation.

In the education of youth, there is nothing which requires more serious attention than the proper regulation of the sense of ridicule; nor is there any instance in which the legislator has it more in his power to influence national manners, than by watching over those public exhibitions which avail themselves of this principle of human nature, as a vehicle of entertainment to the multitude.

SECT. IV.—OF TASTE, CONSIDERED IN ITS RELATION TO MORALS.

From the explanation formerly given of the import of the phrases Moral Beauty and Moral Deformity, it may be easily conceived in what manner the character and the conduct of our fellow-creatures may become subservient to the gratification of Taste. The use which the poet makes of this class of our intellectual pleasures, is entirely analogous to the resources which he borrows from the charms of external nature. By skilful selections and combinations, characters more exalted and more pleasing may be drawn, than have ever fallen under our observation; and a series of events may be exhibited in perfect consonance to our moral feelings. Rewards and punishments may be distributed by the poet with an exact regard to the merits of individuals; and those irregularities in the distribution of happiness and misery, which furnish the subject of so many complaints in real life, may be corrected in the world created by his genius. Here, too, the poet borrows from nature the model after which he copies, not only as he accommodates his imaginary arrangements to his unperverted sense of justice, but as he accommodates them to the *general laws* by which the world is governed; for whatever exceptions may occur in particular cases, there can be no more doubt about the fact, that virtue is the direct road to happiness, and vice to misery, than that, in the material world, blemishes and defects are lost amid prevailing beauty and order.

The power of moral taste, like that which has for its object the beauty of material forms and the various productions of the fine arts, requires much exercise for its development and culture. The one species of taste also, as well as the other, is susceptible of a false refinement, injurious to our own happiness, and to our usefulness as members of Society.

With this false refinement of taste is sometimes connected the peculiar species of misanthropy which is grafted on a worthy and benevolent heart. When the standard of moral excellence we have been accustomed to dwell upon in imagination is greatly elevated above the common attainments of humanity,

we are apt to become too difficult and fastidious (if I may use the expression) in our *moral taste;* or, in plainer language, to become unreasonably censorious of the follies and vices of our contemporaries. In such cases, it may happen that the native benevolence of the mind, by being habitually directed towards ideal characters, may prove a source of real dissatisfaction and dislike towards those with whom we associate. Such a disposition, when carried to an extreme, not only sours the temper, and dries up all the springs of innocent comfort which nature has so liberally provided for us in the common incidents of life, but, by withdrawing a man from active pursuits, renders all his talents and virtues useless to society. A character of this description has furnished to Molière the subject of the most finished of all his dramatic pieces; and to Marmontel, of one of his most agreeable and useful tales. The former of these is universally known as the masterpiece of French comedy; but the latter possesses also an uncommon degree of merit, by the hints it suggests for curing the weaknesses in which the character originates, and by the interesting contrast it exhibits between the *Misanthrope* of Molière, and a man who unites inflexibility of principle with that accommodation of temper which is necessary for the practical exercise of virtue. The great nurse and cherisher of this species of misanthropy is solitary contemplation; and the only effectual remedy is society and business, together with a habit of directing the attention rather to the correction of our own faults than to a jealous and suspicious examination of the motives which influence the conduct of our neighbours.

Considered as a principle of action, a cultivated moral taste, while it provides an effectual security against the grossness necessarily connected with many vices, cherishes a temper of mind friendly to all that is amiable, or generous, or elevated in our nature. When separated, however, as it sometimes is, from a strong sense of duty, it can scarcely fail to prove a fallacious guide; the influence of fashion, and of other casual associations, tending perpetually to lead it astray. This is more particularly remarkable in men to whom the gratifica-

tions of *taste in general* form the principal object of pursuit, and whose habits of life encourage them to look no higher for their rule of conduct than the way of the world.

The language employed by some of the Greek philosophers in their speculations concerning the nature of virtue seems, on a superficial view, to imply that they supposed the moral faculty to be wholly resolvable into a sense of the beautiful; and hence Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Hutcheson, and others, have been led to adopt a phraseology which has the appearance of substituting taste, in contradistinction to reason and conscience, as the ultimate standard of right and wrong.

While on this subject I cannot help taking notice of a highly exceptionable passage which occurs in one of Mr. Burke's later publications,—a passage in which (after contrasting the polished and courtly manners of the higher orders with the coarseness and vulgarity of the multitude) he remarks, that "among the former, vice loses half its malignity by losing all its grossness." The fact, according to *my* view of things, is precisely the reverse; that the malignant contagiousness of vice is increased tenfold by every circumstance which draws a veil over, or disguises its native deformity. On this argument volumes might be written, and I sincerely wish that a hand could be found equal to the task. At present, I must content myself with recommending it to the serious attention of moralists, as one of the most important topics of *practical ethics* which the actual circumstances of this part of the world point out as an object of philosophical discussion.

From each of the *four* principles which have now been under consideration unfortunate consequences result, wherever it prevails in the character, as the leading motive to action. Where they all maintain their due place, in subordination to the moral faculty, they tend at once to fortify virtuous habits, and to recommend them, by the influence of amiable example, to the imitation of others.

A partial consideration of the phenomena of moral perception, connected with one or other of these principles, has sug-

gested some of the most popular theories concerning the origin of our moral ideas. An attention to the moral faculty alone, without regard to the principles which were intended to operate as its auxiliaries, and which contribute, in fact, so powerfully to the good order of society, has led a few philosophers into an opposite extreme, less dangerous, undoubtedly, in its practical tendency, but less calculated perhaps to recommend ethical disquisitions to the notice of those who are engrossed with the active concerns of life.

All the foregoing inquiries concerning the moral constitution of man proceed on the supposition that he has a freedom of choice between good and evil; and that, when he deliberately performs an action which he knows to be wrong, he renders himself justly obnoxious to punishment. That this supposition is agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind will not be disputed.

From very early times, indeed, the truth of the supposition has been called in question by a few speculative men, who have contended that the actions we perform are the necessary result of the constitutions of our minds, operated on by the circumstances of our external situation, and that what we call moral delinquencies are as much a part of our destiny as the corporeal or intellectual qualities we have received from nature. The argument in support of this doctrine has been proposed in various forms, and has been frequently urged with the confidence of demonstration.

With the consideration of these metaphysical subtilties, it seems to me improper to interrupt at present the train of our ethical inquiries. And, although I do not by any means go so far as Lord Bolingbroke when he pronounces, that "no one can deny the Free-will of man *without lying*,"[1] I trust that I

[1] "The Free-will of man, which no one can deny [that he has] without lying, or denying his instinctive [renouncing his intuitive] knowledge."—Bolingbroke's *Philosophical Works*, Vol. V. p. 85, [*Fragments or Minutes of Essays*, lxii.] The same assertion in substance occurs in various other parts of his writings. [See below, Appendix, sect. v.]

may fairly assume in what follows, the fact of man's free agency as sufficiently established by the evidence of consciousness; referring those who wish to enter more deeply into the controversy to the Appendix at the end of this work.*

* [The Appendix here referred to as containing Mr. Stewart's discussion of the great question of Free-will and Necessity, ought, I think, properly to follow in this place; as indeed is apparent both from the preceding passages and from the *Outlines*, (above, p. 42.) It was, therefore, in the former edition, dislocated from its connexions by being adjourned to the end of the second volume. I shall accordingly restore it to its regular consecution; and the rather as by this distribution, the volumes will be not only more logically but more equally divided.—*Ed.*]

APPENDIX.*

OF MAN'S FREE AGENCY.

(P. 341.)

SECT. I.—PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.—EXPLANATION OF SOME AMBIGUOUS TERMS.

All the foregoing inquiries concerning the moral constitution of man, proceed on the supposition that he has a *freedom of choice between good and evil*, and that, when he deliberately performs an action which he knows to be wrong, he renders himself justly obnoxious to punishment. That this supposition is agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind will not be disputed.

From very early times indeed the truth of the supposition has been called in question by a few speculative men, who have contended that the actions we perform are the necessary result of the constitutions of our minds, operated on by the circumstances of our external situation; and that what we call moral

* [This Appendix, which perhaps might not improperly constitute an eighth *Chapter* of the *Second Book*, was in the former edition entitled *Appendix I.*, and placed at the end of the second volume, immediately before the two other Appendices. In all of these, Mr. Stewart has borrowed considerably from his previous publications, especially from the *Dissertation;* this useful repetition, however, it is not always necessary to specify. It should be mentioned that of this Appendix there is extant an authentic copy in manuscript, affording additions to the printed text: which, in so far as they are of importance, and not already made use of by Mr. Stewart in his published works, are incorporated in the present edition.—*Ed.*]

delinquencies are as much a part of our destiny as the corporeal or intellectual qualities we have received from Nature. The argument in support of this doctrine has been proposed in various forms, and has been frequently urged with the confidence of demonstration.

This question about Predestination and Free-will has furnished, in all ages and countries, inexhaustible matter of contention, both to Philosophers and Divines. In the ancient schools of Greece it is well known how generally and how keenly it was agitated. Among the Mahometans it constitutes one of the principal points of division between the followers of Omar and those of Ali; and among the ancient Jews it was the subject of endless dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It is scarcely necessary for me to add, what violent controversies it has produced, and still continues to produce, in the Christian world.—[See on this subject the *Discourse on the Life and Writings of Pascal* by the Abbé Bossut, printed at the end of his *History of Mathematics.*]

As this controversy, like most others in metaphysics, has been involved in much unnecessary perplexity by the ambiguity of language, a few brief remarks on some *equivocal terms* connected with the question at issue, may perhaps add something to the perspicuity and precision of the following reasonings. In stating these remarks, however, I shall not scrupulously confine myself to such as are to bear on my intended argument, but shall avail myself of every opportunity that may occur of correcting those inaccurate modes of speaking which have any connexion, however distant, with this important article in the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

The word *Volition* is defined by Locke to be "an act of the mind, knowingly exerting that dominion it takes itself to have over any part of the man, by employing it in, or withholding it from any particular action."*—Dr. Reid defines it more briefly to be, "the determination of the mind to do or not to do something which we conceive to be in our power." He remarks, at the same time, that "this definition is not strictly

* [*Essay*, Book II. chap. xxi. § 15.]

logical, inasmuch as *the determination of the mind* is only another term for volition. But it ought to be observed, that the most simple acts of the mind do not admit of being logically defined. The only way to form a precise notion of them is to reflect attentively upon them as we feel them in ourselves. Without this reflection no definition can enable us to reason about them with correctness."*

It is necessary to form a distinct notion of what is meant by the word *Volition*, in order to understand the import of the word *Will;* for this last word properly expresses that *power* of the mind of which volition is the *act*, and it is only by attending to what we experience, while we are conscious of the act, that we can understand anything concerning the nature of the power.

The word *Will*, however, is not always used in this its proper acceptation, but is frequently substituted for *Volition;* as when I say that my hand moves in obedience to my *Will*. This indeed happens to the names of most of the powers of the mind; that the same word is employed to express the *power* and the *act*. Thus Imagination signifies both the power and the act of imagining; Abstraction signifies both the power and the act of abstracting, and so in other instances. But although the word *Will* may, without departing from the usual forms of speech, be used indiscriminately for the power and the act, the word *Volition* applies only to the latter; and it would undoubtedly contribute to the distinctness of our reasonings to restrict the signification of the word *Will* entirely to the former.

It is not necessary, I apprehend, to enlarge any more on the meaning of these terms. It is to be learned only from careful reflection on what passes in our own minds, and to multiply words upon the subject would only involve it in obscurity.

There is, however, a state of the mind perfectly distinct, both from the power and the act of willing, with which they have been frequently confounded, and of which it may therefore be

* [*On the Active Powers*, Essay II. chap. i.—*Works*, p. 531.]

proper to mention the characteristical marks. The state I refer to is properly called *Desire*, the distinction between which and *Will* was first clearly pointed out by Mr. Locke. "I find the *Will*," says he, "often confounded with several of the affections, especially *Desire*, and that by men who would not willingly be thought not to have had very distinct notions of things, and not to have writ very clearly about them."—"This," he justly adds, "has been no small occasion of obscurity and mistake in this matter, and therefore is, as much as may be, to be avoided."* The substance of his remarks on the appropriate meaning of these two terms amounts to the two following propositions:—1. That at the same moment a man may desire one thing and will another. 2. That at the same moment a man may have contrary desires, but cannot have contrary wills. The notions, therefore, which ought to be annexed to the words *will* and *desire* are essentially different.

It will be proper, however, to state Mr. Locke's observations in his own words:—"He that shall turn his thoughts inwards upon what passes in his own mind when he *wills*, shall see that the will or power of volition is conversant about nothing, but that particular determination of the mind, whereby barely by a thought, the mind endeavours to give rise, continuation, or stop to any action which it takes to be in its power. This well considered plainly shows, that the will is perfectly distinguished from desire, which, in the very same action, may have a quite contrary tendency from that which our wills set us upon. A man whom I cannot deny may oblige me to use persuasions to another, which at the same time I am speaking, I may wish not to prevail on him. In this case, it is plain the will and desire run counter. I *will* the action that tends one way, whilst my desire tends another, and that the direct contrary. A man who, by a violent fit of gout in his limbs, finds a want of appetite in his stomach removed, desires to be eased too of the pain of his feet or hands, (for, wherever there is pain there is a desire to be rid of it;) though yet, while he apprehends that the removal of the pain may translate the noxious

* [*Essay*, Book II. chap. xxi. § 30.]

humours to a more vital part, his *will* is never determined to any one action that may serve to remove this pain. Whence it is evident that desiring and willing are two distinct acts of the mind; and, consequently, that the will, which is but the power of volition, is much more distinct from desire."*

It is surprising how little this important passage has been attended to by Locke's successors.[1]—[It has been overlooked even by my ingenious friend Dr. Brown, who has used the words in question, as if they were exactly synonymous.

From observing the connexion between volition and its consequent effects, we get the idea of *Power*, the consciousness of which is always accompanied with pleasure, as I had occasion formerly [p. 156, *seq.*] to shew. It is this, I believe, which is partly the cause of the mortification we feel when we peruse those systems which call in question our free agency.

It is scarcely necessary for me to observe, that we are altogether ignorant of the connexion between the volitions of the mind and the consequent actions. We will the end, and it is accomplished in a way inexplicable to us.]

Inclination is another word with which *Will* is frequently confounded. Thus, when the apothecary says in Romeo and Juliet,

> "My poverty, but not my *will* consents:
> Take this and drink it off; the work is done;

the word *will* is plainly used as synonymous with inclination; *not* in its strict logical sense, as the immediate antecedent of *action*. It is with the same latitude that the word is used in common conversation, when we speak of doing a thing which duty prescribes *against our own will;* or when we speak of doing a thing *willingly* or *unwillingly*.

* [*Essay*, Book II. chap. xxi. § 30.]

[1] According to Mr. Belsham, "*Volition* is a modification of the passion of *desire*."—(*Elements*, [Chap. ix. sect. i.] p. 227.) In another passage we are told by the same author, that "*volition* has been proved by Dr. Hartley to be *a case of association*;"—(Ibid. [Chap. vii. sect. ii.] p. 175,)—a proposition which to my mind is quite incomprehensible. —[In the manuscript:—a proposition which to my mind is not less incomprehensible than if it had been said, that Hartley had proved volition to be *a case of mathematical instruments*.]

In some instances *pleasure* is used in the same sense with *will*, as in this sentence of Locke. "We can *at pleasure* move several parts of our bodies;" and in the following line of Pope *will* is used for *pleasure*.

"Go, then, the guilty *at thy will* chastise."

It is very remarkable that the two words are used as synonymous by Collins, in stating the very proposition which it is the object of his tract to establish. "I contend for Liberty," says he, "as it signifies a power in man to do as he *wills* or *pleases*."*

Dr. Johnson† on this, as on every other occasion where logical precision of ideas is called for in a definition, is strangely indistinct and inconsistent. *Will* he defines to be "that power by which we *desire* a purpose;" and he gives as its *synonyme* the scholastic word *Velleity*, [*Velleitas.*] On turning to the article *velleity*, we are told that "it is the school term used to signify *the lowest degree of desire*;" in illustration of which Dr. South is quoted, according to whom "the *wishing* of a thing is not properly the *willing* it, but it is that which is called by the schools an imperfect *velleity*, and imports no more than an idle inoperative complacency in, and *desire* of the end, without any consideration of the means."

Dr. Priestley's language on this subject is as loose as that of Dr. Johnson. "What is *desire* but a *wish* to obtain some apprehended good? And is not every wish a volition?"[1]

In the next page he tells us, that "the determinations of what we call the *will* are in fact nothing more than a particular case of the general doctrine of association of ideas, and, therefore, a perfectly mechanical thing."

In another paragraph‡ of the chapter quoted above, Locke justly objects to the terms in which the question concerning Liberty and Necessity is commonly stated, *whether man's will be free or no?* This question he pronounces to be "*unreason-*

* [*Inquiry concerning Human Liberty;* Preface, § 1.]

† [*Dictionary*, &c.]

[1] *Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity*, p. 45, [edit. Birmingham, 1782; p. 35, edit. London, 1777.—Sect. iv.]

‡ [§ xiv.]

able and unintelligible; inasmuch as *liberty*, which is but a *power*, belongs only to agents, and cannot be an attribute or modification of the *will*, which is also but a *power*."[1]

To this remark of Locke it may be added, that, instead of speaking (according to common phraseology) of the influence of motives on the *will*, it would be much more correct to speak of the influence of motives on the *agent*. We are apt to forget what *the will* is, and to consider it as something inanimate and passive, the state of which can be altered only by the action of some external cause. The habitual use of the metaphorical word *motives*, to denote the intentions or purposes which accompany our voluntary actions, or, in other words, the *ends* which we have in view in the exercise of the power entrusted to us, has a strong tendency to confirm us in this error, by leading us to assimilate in fancy the *volition* of a mind to the *motion* of a body; and the circumstances which give rise to this volition to the *vis motrix* by which the motion is produced.

It was probably in order to facilitate the reception of his favourite scheme of Necessity, that Hobbes was led to substitute, instead of the old division of our faculties into the powers of the Understanding and those of the Will, a new division of his own, in which the name of *Cognitive* powers was given to the former, and that of *Motive* powers to the latter. To familiarize the ears of superficial readers to this phraseology, was of itself one great step towards securing their suffrages against the supposition of man's free agency. To say that the *will* is determined by *motive* powers, is to employ a language which virtually implies a recognition of the very point in dispute. Accordingly, Mr. Belsham is at pains to keep the metaphorical origin of the word *motive* in the view of his readers, by prefixing to his argument, in favour of the scheme of necessity, the following definition:—

"*Motive*, in this discussion, is to be understood in its most extensive sense. It expresses whatever MOVES or influences the mind in its choice."[2]

[1] This remark had been previously made by Hobbes.

[2] *Elements*, [Chap. ix. sect. i.] p 228.

According to Mr. Locke, the ideas of *liberty* and of *power* are very nearly the same. "Every one," he observes, "finds in himself a power to begin or forbear, continue or put an end to several actions in himself. From the consideration of the extent of this power of the mind over the actions of the man, which every one finds in himself, arise the ideas of Liberty and Necessity." And a few sentences afterwards:—"The idea of liberty is the idea of a power in any agent to do or forbear any particular action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either of them is preferred to the other. Where either of them is not in the power of the agent, to be produced by him according to his volition, there he is not at Liberty but under Necessity."[1] That these definitions are not perfectly correct will appear hereafter. They approach, indeed, very nearly to the definitions of Liberty and Necessity given by Hobbes, Collins, and Edwards; whereas Locke, in order to do justice to his own decided opinion on the subject, ought to have included also in his idea of Liberty, a *power* over the determinations of his will.

It is owing in a great measure to this close connexion between the ideas of *Free-will* and of *Power*, and to the pleasure with which the consciousness of *power* is always accompanied, that we feel so painful a mortification in perusing those systems in which our free agency is called in question. Dr. Priestley himself, as well as his great oracle, Dr. Hartley, has acknowledged, that "he was not a ready convert to the doctrine of Necessity, and that he gave up his liberty with great reluctance."[2] But whence this reluctance to embrace a doctrine so "great and glorious," but from its repugnance to the natural feelings and natural wishes of the human mind?

In addition to the foregoing considerations, the following detached hints may be of use in guarding us against some logical oversights which have misled a large proportion of the ingenious men who have engaged in this controversy.

[1] Locke's *Works*, 8vo edit. Vol. I. p. 224. [*Essay*, Book II. chap. xxi. §§ 7, 8.]

[2] *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated.* Preface, p. xxvii. Birmingham, 1782. [London, 1777, p. xxxi.]

In the case of inanimate matter, when I say that the motion produced is proportional to the impressed force, I only assert an identical proposition; for my only notion of *the quantity of a force* is from the effects it produces. In like manner, in the case of *motives*, I may, if I choose, define the *strength* of a motive by its prevailing over other motives in determining the will, and then lay it down as a proposition, that the will is determined by the strongest motive. In this case likewise it is evident that I only assert an identical proposition,—a proposition, however, extremely apt to mislead, in consequence of its applying to mind the word *strength*, which, from its ordinary and proper application to the forces that move *inert* matter, suggests a theory concerning the influence of motives which takes for granted the thing to be proved.

Let us consider what is meant, when it is said that the will is *necessarily* determined by motives. Is it to be understood that the connexion is similar to that between a force impressed on a body and the subsequent motion? But of the nature of this connexion I am as ignorant as of the other. In both cases I only see the fact. It is remarkable that the advocates for Necessity have attempted to explain the actions of voluntary agents by the phenomena of motion, and that some other metaphysicians (in particular Kepler and Lord Monboddo) have attempted to explain the phenomena of motion by the operations of voluntary agents. In both cases philosophers saw the difficulties attending that set of phenomena to which they confined their attention, and endeavoured to explain them by the analogy of another class of facts not so immediately under their consideration at the moment, without recollecting that both the one and the other are equally placed beyond our comprehension.

Although, however, the connexion between an impressed force and the subsequent motion be as inexplicable as the connexion between the motive and the subsequent action, I would not be understood to insinuate that the two cases are at all parallel. In the case of motion, although I cannot trace the necessary connexion between it and the impressed force, I am

certain that the motion is the effect of *some cause* with which it is necessarily connected; for every change that takes place in an inanimate object, suggests to me the notion of a cause. But in the case of the determinations of a voluntary agent, *he* is himself the author of them; nor could anything have led philosophers to look out for any other causes of them, but an apprehended analogy between volition in a mind and motion in a body.

The argument for Necessity derives all its force from the maxim, "*that every change requires a cause.*"[1] But this maxim, although true with respect to inanimate matter, does not apply to intelligent agents, which cannot be conceived without the power of self-determination. Upon an accurate analysis, indeed, of the meaning of words, it will be found that the idea of an *efficient cause* implies the idea of *mind*, and consequently, that it is absurd to ascribe the volitions of *mind* to the efficiency of causes foreign to itself. It is curious that Mr. Hume, who has in one part of his system denied the certainty of the maxim just now mentioned, has, in another part of it, adopted the scheme of necessity, although that scheme derives all its plausibility from an undue and unwarrantable extension of this very maxim.[2]

[1] This maxim is generally stated in too unqualified a form. "In the idea of every *change*," says Dr. Price, "is included that of its being an *effect*."—*Review*, &c., p. 30, 3d edit., Lond. 1827, [p. 34, original edition, 1758.—Chap. I. sect. ii.] He should have said *every change in inanimate matter*. That he himself understood it under this limitation is evident, from the zeal with which he always combats the scheme of necessity.

[2] From these observations it seems to me to follow, that, whatever may be the nature of the relation between a *motive* and an *action*, there is no reason for concluding it to be at all analogous to that between a *cause* and its *effect*. In farther proof of this some authors have remarked, that the latter connexion is always constant and uniform, whereas we know that the same motive may at different times lead to very different actions.—(See the very ingenious *Essays, Philosophical and Literary*, of the late learned and excellent Dr. James Gregory.) But this answer is not satisfactory; and as it places the point in dispute on an improper ground, it may be useful to show in what its fallacy consists. By giving up an argument which will not bear examination we strengthen a good cause, no less than by producing additional evidence in its support.

In considering the connexion between Cause and Effect, there are three things

[It would perhaps, (as noticed,) contribute to render our reasonings on this subject more distinct, if instead of speaking of the influence of motives on the *will*, we were to speak of the influence of motives on the *agent*. We are apt to forget what the *will* is, and to consider it as something inanimate which can have its state changed only by the operation of some foreign cause.]

Before quitting this part of the subject, there remains to be considered another argument for the necessary connexion between motives and actions, which has been lately proposed by Dr. Priestley, and on which that very ingenious writer seems to lay considerable stress.

This argument proceeds on the supposition that man is wholly a *material* being, and that the power of thinking is the result of a certain organization of the brain. But, if man be wholly

to be attended to; the cause, the subject on which it operates, and the effect. While the cause and the subject continue the same, we expect the same effect with the utmost confidence; but if either the cause or the subject vary, we expect that the effect will be different. When we speak of the constant conjunction between cause and effect in physics, we always take for granted that the cause operates in the same circumstances. A variety of cases might be mentioned, in which we see the operation of the same cause, but are unable to predict with certainty what the effect will be, in consequence of our ignorance concerning *the state of the subject*. This is the case with respect to the medicines which we apply to the human body. Now, the fact may be supposed to be somewhat analogous with respect to the mind. It always indeed retains a consciousness of its *personal identity;* but notwithstanding this circumstance it is constantly undergoing very important alterations,—insomuch that the character may be changed in a considerable degree by the acquisition of new information, or the acquisition of new habits, (both of which it may derive from external circumstances in a way altogether independent of its choice.) Indeed it may be doubted whether the mind can be considered as exactly the same subject in any two instants of its existence. We are not therefore entitled to conclude, that the relation between motive and action is different from the relation between cause and effect in physics, *merely from the want of constant conjunction*, unless it could be shown that the same motive was followed by different actions *when operating upon the same precise subject*. Nor is this all. The same verbal proposition, when stated at different times to the same individual, cannot be considered as the same motive, unless it is always apprehended in the same light by the *understanding*, the conclusions of which plainly do not depend on our choice. Allowing, therefore, that the relation between motive and action were the same with the relation between cause and effect, it might happen that no constant conjunction between them should be observable, in consequence either of some alteration in the state of the intellectual powers, or of the active principles

material, does it not follow that all his functions must be regulated by the laws of mechanism, and that, of consequence, all his actions proceed from an irresistible necessity? According to this argument, therefore, the doctrine of Necessity is an obvious corollary from that of Materialism.

As this reasoning takes the scheme of materialism for granted, it is they alone who have adopted that scheme who are interested in examining whether the reasoning be conclusive or not. The only question, therefore, before us at present is, whether the author's conclusion be a logical consequence of his premises. That it is *not* a consequence of his premises, but a mere play on words, will appear obvious from the following consideration.

That Matter is incapable of acting, excepting in so far as it is acted upon, is a principle universally admitted by the soundest philosophers, and perfectly agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind. But this principle is founded on the supposition, that matter is *inert and insentient*, incapable of thought, or of changing its state either of rest or of motion till it is acted on by some foreign power.* If we reject this supposition, as Dr. Priestley has done, and consider matter as consisting of certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and requiring nothing but a particular arrangement or organization to exhibit the phenomena of sensation and of thought, we are certainly not entitled to apply any inference from our common notions concerning matter to the functions of a being, organized as Dr. Priestley supposes man to be. If our ideas of matter imply nothing more than certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and if matter properly organized may produce a being capable of sensation and of thought, why may not the same organization produce a being capable of *acting from his own free-will*, and without the necessary influence of any motive imposed on him from without? In this instance, therefore, Dr. Priestley's zeal for a favourite opinion has betrayed him into a sophism very unworthy of his abilities, and which derives the very slight plausibility it possesses entirely from an ambiguity in the meaning of the word *matter*, occasioned by his own peculiar speculations on its nature and properties.

* [See. above, p. 352.]

It is amusing enough that this very argument of Dr. Priestley's, or at least one extremely similar to it, was long ago proposed *ironically* by Dr. Berkeley, in his ingenious dialogues, entitled the *Minute Philosopher*,—a book which (notwithstanding a few paradoxical passages connected with the author's system of Idealism) may be safely recommended as one of the most instructive, as well as entertaining works, of which English philosophy has to boast. "Corporeal objects strike on the organs of sense, whence ensues a vibration in the nerves, which being communicated to the soul or animal spirit in the brain or root of the nerves, produceth therein that motion called volition; and this produceth a new determination on the spirits, causing them to flow in such nerves as must necessarily, by the laws of mechanism, produce such certain actions. This being the case, it follows that those things which vulgarly pass for human actions are to be esteemed mechanical, and that they are falsely ascribed to a free principle. There is therefore no foundation for praise or blame, fear or hope, reward or punishment, nor consequently for religion, which is built upon and supposeth those things."[1] The alteration which Dr. Priestley has made on this argument is certainly far from an improvement; for his peculiar notions concerning the nature of matter render it much more inconsequential than it must appear to those who retain the common opinions on that subject.

SECT. II.—STATEMENT OF THE COMMON ARGUMENT FOR NECESSITY.

Before proceeding to an examination of this question, I shall premise a few principles in which both parties are agreed, or which at least appear *to me* to be concessions, which the advocates for Free-will may safely make to their antagonists, without any injury to their general argument.

1. *Every action is performed with some view*, or, in other words, *is performed from some motive*. Dr. Reid indeed denies this with zeal, but I am doubtful if he has strengthened his cause

[1] Dialogue VII. sect. xiv.

by doing so ;[1] for he confesses that the actions which are performed without motives, are perfectly trifling and insignificant, and not such as lead to any general conclusion concerning the merit or demerit of moral agents. I should therefore rather be disposed to yield this point than to dispute a proposition not materially connected with the question at issue. One thing is clear and indisputable, that it is only in so far as a man acts from motives or intentions, that he is entitled to the character of a rational being.

2. *The merit of an action depends entirely on the motive from which it was performed.* Dr. Reid remarks, that some Necessitarians have triumphed in this principle as the very hinge of the controversy, whereas the truth is, that no reasonable advocate for Free-will ever called it in question.*

So far, I think, we are justified in going. The great question is, *How* do these motives determine the will ? In answer to this question the Necessitarians reason as follows :—

Every *change in nature*, we are told, implies the operation of a *cause ;* and this maxim, it is pretended, holds not only with respect to *inanimate matter*, but with respect to the changes which take place in the state of a *mind.*† Every volition, therefore, must have been produced by a motive with which it is as necessarily connected as any other effect with its cause ; and when different motives are presented to the mind at the same time, the will yields to the strongest, as necessarily as a body urged by two contrary forces moves in the direction of that which is most powerful.

The foregoing argument goes to prove, that all human actions are as necessarily produced by motives as the going of a clock is necessarily produced by the weights, and that no human action could have been otherwise than it really was. Nay, it applies also in full force to the Deity, and indeed to all intelligent beings whatever ; for it is not founded on anything peculiar to the *human* mind, but on the *impossibility of free*

[1] *Essays on the Active Powers*, pp. 293, 294.—[Essay IV. chap. iv.—*Works*, p. 609.]

* [Ibid. p. 608.]

† [See above, p. 352.]

agency; and, of consequence, it leads to this general conclusion, that *no event* in the universe could have happened otherwise than it did.

When the scheme of Necessity is pushed to this length, it involves the supposition, "that every created being, and every event, even the most trifling, has an existence as necessary as that of the Deity;" a supposition which forms one of the fundamental principles of the system of Spinoza. On this subject, I confess, it appears to me that Spinoza reasons well, and that, if we admit his principles, we cannot deny his conclusion. The conclusion, at the same time, is such as every unprejudiced understanding must revolt at the instant it is mentioned, and which may serve as a demonstration, in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, of the erroneousness of the principle from which it is deduced. "It does not indeed appear possible," as Mr. Maclaurin has observed, "to invent another system equally absurd, amounting (as it does in fact) to this proposition, that there is but one substance in the universe endowed with infinite attributes, (particularly infinite extension and cogitation,) which produces all other things necessarily as its own modifications, and which alone is, in all events, both physical and moral, at once cause and effect, agent and patient."[1] Accordingly, Dr. Clarke has been at much pains to prove, that the Deity *must be a free agent*,* and, therefore, that free agency is not impossible; from which he infers, that there must be some flaw in the reasonings just stated, to prove that man is a necessary agent. If this reasoning of Clarke's be admitted as conclusive, where is the absurdity (I would ask) of supposing, that God may have been pleased to place man in a state of moral discipline, by imparting to him a freedom of choice between good and evil, in like manner as he has imparted to him various other faculties and powers essentially different from anything we observe in the lower animals? Is not the contrary assertion a presumptuous attempt to set limits to the Divine Omnipotence?

[1] *Account of Newton's Discoveries*, Book I. chap. iv.

* [See *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, Props. iii. ix. x.]

Among the various forms which religious enthusiasm assumes, there is a certain prostration of the mind, which, under the specious disguise of a deep humility, aims at exalting the Divine perfections by annihilating all the powers which belong to human nature. "Nothing is more usual for fervent devotion," says Sir James Mackintosh, in speaking of some theories current among the Hindoos, "than to dwell so long and so warmly on the meanness and worthlessness of created things, and on the all-sufficiency of the Supreme Being, that it slides insensibly from comparative to absolute language, and in the eagerness of its zeal to magnify the Deity, seems to annihilate everything else."[1]

This excellent observation may serve to account for the zeal displayed by many devout men in favour of the scheme of Necessity. "We have nothing (they frequently and justly remind us) but what we have received." But the question here is simply a matter of fact, whether we have or have not received from God the gift of Free-will; and the only argument, it must be remembered, which they have yet been able to advance for the negative proposition, is, that this gift was impossible even for the power of God; an argument, we may remark, which not only annihilates the power of man, but annihilates that of God also, and subjects him, as well as all his creatures, to the control of causes which he is unable to resist. So completely does this scheme defeat the pious views in which it has sometimes originated. I say *sometimes*, for this very argument against the liberty of the will is employed by Spinoza; according to whom the free agency of man involves the absurd supposition of an *imperium in imperio* in the universe.[2] Voltaire, too, who, in his latter days, abandoning those principles for which he had before, when in the full vigour of his faculties, so zealously and eloquently contended, seems to have become a convert to the scheme of Fatalism, has on one occasion had recourse to an argument against man's Free-agency, similar in substance to what is advanced by Spinoza in the passage

[1] See *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. Note B. [*supra*, p. 371.]

[2] *Tractat. Polit.* Cap. II. sect. vi.

now referred to. "En effet, il seroit bien *singulier* que toute la nature, tous les astres obéissent à des loix éternelles, et qu'il y eût un petit animal haut de cinq pieds, qui en mepris de ces lois pût agir toujours comme il lui plairoit au seul gré de son caprice."[1]—"Singular!" (exclaims Dr. Beattie after quoting the preceding sentence,) "Ay, singular indeed:—but not a whit more singular than that this same animal of five feet should perceive, and think, and read, and write, and speak; attributes which no astronomer of my acquaintance has ever supposed to belong to the planets, notwithstanding their brilliant appearance and stupendous magnitude."[2] The reply is quite as good as the argument is entitled to.*

SECT. III.—VIEW OF THE QUESTION GIVEN BY HOBBES.

According to the view of the subject that has now been taken, we are led to conclude, that man possesses a power over the determinations of his will:—and this is precisely the scheme of what is commonly called *Free-will*, in opposition to that of *Necessity*.

But this power over the determinations of the will has been represented by some philosophers as an absurdity and impossibility. "Liberty," we are told, "consists only in a power to *act as we will;* and it is impossible to conceive in any being a greater liberty than this. Hence it follows, that liberty does not extend to the determinations of the will, but only to the actions consequent upon its determinations. To say that we

[1] *Le Philosophe Ignorant*, xiii.

[2] *Essay on Truth*, p. 360. 2d edit.

* [I cannot resist adding the two following passages from Pascal's *Pensées*.

Part I. Art. iii.—"L'homme est si grand, que sa grandeur paroît même en ce qu'il se connoît misérable. Un arbre ne se connoît pas misérable. Il est vrai que c'est être misérable que de se connoître misérable; mais aussi c'est être grand que de se connoître qu'on est misérable. Ainsi toutes ces misères prouvent sa grandeur. Ce sont misères de grand seigneur, misères d'un roi dépossédé."

Art. vi.—"L'homme n'est qu'un roseau le plus foible de la nature; mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut pas que l'univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser. Une vapeur, une goutte d'eau suffit pour le tuer. Mais quand l'univers l'écraseroit, l'homme seroit encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt, et l'avantage que l'univers a sur lui, l'univers n'en sait rien. Ainsi toute notre dignité consiste dans la pensée. C'est de là qu'il faut nous relever, non de l'espace et de la durée. Travaillons donc à bien penser: voilà le principe de la morale."—*Ed.*]

have power to will such an action, is to say, that we may will it if we will. This supposes the will to be determined by a prior will; and for the same reason that will must be determined by a will prior to it, and so on in an infinite series of wills, which is absurd. To act *freely*, therefore, can mean nothing more than to act *voluntarily;* and this is all the liberty that can be conceived in man or in any other being."

Agreeably to this reasoning, Hobbes defines a free-agent to be "he that can do if he will, and forbear if he will."[1] The same definition has been adopted by Leibnitz,[2] by Collins, by Gravesande, by Edwards, by Bonnet, and by all later Necessitarians. It cannot be better expressed than in the words of Gravesande: "Facultas faciendi quod libuerit, quæcunque fuerit voluntatis determinatio."[3]

Dr. Priestley ascribes this peculiar notion of Free-will to Hobbes as its author;[4] but it is, in fact, of much older date even among modern metaphysicians; coinciding exactly with the doctrine of those scholastic divines who contended for the *Liberty of Spontaneity*, in opposition to the *Liberty of Indifference*. It is, however, to Hobbes that the partisans of this opinion are indebted for the happiest and most popular illustration of it that has yet been given. "I conceive," says he, "Liberty is to be rightly defined in this manner:—Liberty is *the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent.* As, for example, the water is said to descend *freely*, or to have *liberty* to descend by the channel of the river, because there is

[1] Hobbes's *Works*, p. 484, folio edit. [*Treatise of Liberty and Necessity.*]

[2] Leibnitz has almost literally translated the words of Hobbes. "Proprie loquendo volumus agere; non vero volumus velle; alioqui dicere etiam possemus, velle nos habere voluntatem volendi, quod in infinitum abiret."—*Opera*, Tom. I. p. 156, [ed. Dutensii, *Theodicæa*, Pars I. sect. li.]

[3] *Introductio ad Philosophiam*, sect. cxv.

[4] "The doctrine of philosophical necessity," says Priestley, "is in reality a modern thing; not older, I believe, than Mr. Hobbes. Of the Calvinists, I believe Mr. Jonathan Edwards to be the first."—*Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity*, p. 195, [ed. Birmingham, 1782; p. 160, ed. London, 1777.—Sect. xii.]

Supposing this statement to be correct, does not the very modern date of Hobbes's *alleged* discovery furnish a very strong presumption against it?

no impediment that way; but not across, because the banks are impediments. And though water cannot ascend, yet men never say it wants the *liberty* to ascend, but the *faculty* or *power*, because the impediment is in the nature of the water, and intrinsical. So also we say, he that is tied wants the *liberty* to go, because the impediment is not in him, but in his bands; whereas we say not so of him who is sick or lame, because the impediment is in himself."[1]

According to Bonnet, "Moral Liberty is the power of the mind, to obey without constraint the impulse of the motives which act upon it." This definition, which is obviously the same in substance with that of Hobbes, is thus very justly, as well as acutely, animadverted on by Cuvier. "N'admettant aucune action sans motif, comme dit-il il n'y a aucun effet sans cause, Bonnet définit la *Liberté Morale*, le pouvoir de l'âme de suivre sans contrainte les motifs dont elle éprouve l'impulsion; il resout ainsi les objections que l'on tire de la prévision de Dieu; mais peut-être aussi détourne-t-il l'idée qu'on se fait ordinaire de la Liberté. Malgré ces opinions, qui touchent au Matérialisme et au Fatalisme, Bonnet fut très religieux."[2]

From this passage it appears, that the very ingenious writer was as completely aware as Clarke or Reid, of the unsoundness of the definition of *Moral Liberty* given by Hobbes and his followers; and that the ultimate tendency of the doctrine which limits the free-agency of man to (what has been called) the *Liberty of Spontaneity*, was the same, though in a more disguised form, with that of Fatalism. On points of this sort, I have always a peculiar satisfaction, when I am able to fortify my own conclusions by the opinions of writers educated under other forms of government, and other systems of religion. I need not say how much this satisfaction is increased, when the writers with whom I have the good fortune to agree rank as high as Cuvier in the philosophical world.

In order to judge how far the reasoning of Hobbes is in this

[1] *Treatise of Liberty and Necessity*, [in the chapter entitled "My Opinion about Liberty and Necessity."— *Works*, folio edition, p. 483.]

[2] *Biographie Universelle*, à Paris, 1812. Article *Bonnet*.

instance satisfactory, it is necessary to attend to the various significations of the word *liberty;* for the sense in which Hobbes has defined it is only one of its acceptations, and by no means the sense in which it ought to be employed in this controversy.[1]

1. Liberty is opposed to *confinement of the body by superior force*, as when a person is shut up in a prison. It is in this sense that *Hobbes* uses the word; for he tells us that liberty consists only in a power to act as we will. And if the word had no other acceptation, the objection now stated would be a valid one; for as the will cannot be confined by any external force, neither can we with propriety ascribe to the will that species of liberty which is opposed to such confinement.

2. Liberty is opposed to the *restraints on human conduct arising from law and government;* as when we say, that, by entering into a political society, a man gives up part of his natural liberty. In this sense liberty undoubtedly extends to the determinations of the will; and the very obligations which are opposed to it proceed on the supposition that the will is free. The establishment of law does not abridge this freedom, but, on the contrary, it takes for granted that we have it in our power to obey or to transgress; proposing to us on the one hand, the motives of duty and of interest; and setting before us, on the other, the consequences of wilful transgression.

3. Liberty is opposed to *necessity;* and it is in this sense the word is employed, when we say that man is a free and accountable being, and that the connexion between motives and actions is not a necessary connexion, like that between cause and effect. This species of liberty has been called by some *Moral Liberty.*

That there is nothing inconceivable in this idea, appears, I hope, sufficiently from what has been already said. And indeed it is so far from being a metaphysical refinement or subtlety, that the common sense of mankind pronounces men to be accountable for their conduct, only in so far as they are

[1] Reid. *On the Active Powers*, pp. 272, 273, 4to edit. [Essay IV. ch. i.—*Works*. p. 601.]

understood to be morally free. Whence is it that we consider the pain of the rack as an alleviation of the falsehoods extorted from the criminal? Plainly because the motives presented to him are supposed to be such as no ordinary degree of self-command is able to resist. And if we were only satisfied that these motives were *perfectly* irresistible, we would not ascribe to him any guilt at all.

As an additional confirmation of Hobbes's doctrine, it has been urged that human laws require no more to constitute a crime but that it be *voluntary;* and hence it has been inferred, that the criminality consists in the determination of the will, whether that determination be free or necessary.

The case just referred to affords a sufficient refutation of this argument. The confession of the criminal is surely *voluntary* in the strict acceptation of that term; and yet we consider his guilt as alleviated, in the same proportion in which we suppose his moral liberty to be abridged.

It is true that in most cases human laws require no more to constitute a crime but that it be voluntary; because, in general, motives are placed beyond the cognizance of earthly tribunals. But, in a moral view, merit and demerit suppose not only actions to be voluntary, but the agent to be possessed of moral liberty. And even earthly tribunals judge on the same principle, wherever it can be made appear that the person accused was deprived of the power of self-government by insanity, or by some accidental paroxysm of passion.

I shall only mention one other argument in favour of the scheme of Necessity; and I have reserved for it the last place, as it has been proposed with all the confidence of mathematical demonstration by a writer of no less note than Mr. Belsham. It is in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum;* and its more immediate object is to expose to ridicule the consequences which necessarily flow from the doctrine of Free-will.

The argument is this:—"According to the hypothesis of Free-will, the essence of virtue and vice consists in liberty. . . . For example: *benevolence without liberty is no virtue; malignity without liberty is no vice.* Both are equally in a neutral

state. Add a portion of liberty to both; benevolence instantly becomes an eminent virtue, and malignity an odious vice. That is, IF TO EQUALS YOU ADD EQUALS, THE WHOLES WILL BE UNEQUAL. . . . Than which nothing can be more absurd."[1]

On this reasoning, to which it would be unjust to deny the merit of complete originality, I have no comment to offer. I have quoted it chiefly as a specimen of the logical and mathematical skill of the present advocates for the doctrine of philosophical necessity. In this point of view, it forms an amusing contrast to the lofty pretensions of a sect, which prides itself not only on its superiority to vulgar prejudices, but on its sagacity in detecting a fraud so successfully practised on the rest of mankind, by the author of their moral constitution.

If the foregoing remarks be well founded, the only two opinions which, in the actual state of metaphysical science, ought to be stated in contrast, are that of Liberty (or Free-will) on the one side, and that of Necessity on the other. As to the Liberty of Spontaneity, (which expresses a fact altogether foreign to the point in question,) I can conceive no motive for inventing such a phrase, but a desire in some writers to veil the scheme of Necessity from their readers, under a language less revolting to the sentiments of mankind; and in others an anxiety to banish it as far as possible from their own thoughts, by substituting, instead of the terms in which it is commonly expressed, a circumlocution which seems, on a superficial view, to concede something to the advocates for Liberty.

The phrase *Liberty of Indifference*, which has been so frequently substituted, (particularly since the time of Leibnitz,) for the older, simpler, and much more intelligible phrase of Free-will, is, in my opinion, not less objectionable than the *Liberty of Spontaneity*.[2] It certainly conveys but a very inadequate notion of the thing meant;—the power, to wit, of

[1] *Elements of the Philosophy of the Mind, and of Moral Philosophy*, &c., by Thomas Belsham: [Lond. 1801, (only edition?)] pp. 258, 259. [See Magee's *Works*, 1842, Vol. II. p. 62.]

[2] Both phrases are favourite expressions with Lord Kames in his discussions on this subject. See in particular the Appendix to his *Essay on Liberty and Necessity*, in the *last* [or *third*] edition of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*.

choice or *election;* and *that* not only among things indifferent, but (*a fortiori*) between right and wrong, good and evil.

The distinction between *Physical* and *Moral* Necessity I conceive to be not less frivolous than those to which the foregoing animadversions relate. On this point I agree with Diderot's assertion, in a passage to be quoted afterwards, that the word *Necessity* (as it ought to be understood in this dispute) admits but of *one* interpretation.*

SECT. IV.—ARGUMENT FOR NECESSITY, PROPOSED BY LEIBNITZ.

It is well known to all who have any acquaintance with the history of modern philosophy, that one of the fundamental principles of the Leibnitian system is, "that nothing exists without a *Sufficient Reason* why it should be so, and not otherwise." Of this principle the following succinct account is given by Leibnitz himself in his controversial correspondence with Dr. Clarke:—"The great foundation of Mathematics is the principle of Contradiction or Identity; that is, that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time. But in order to proceed from Mathematics to Natural Philosophy, another principle is requisite, (as I have observed in my *Theodicœa*,) I mean the principle of the *Sufficient Reason;* or, in other words, that nothing happens without a *reason* why it should be so rather than otherwise. And accordingly, Archimedes was obliged, in his book *De Æquilibrio*, to take for granted, that, if there be a balance in which everything is alike on both sides, and if equal weights are hung on the two ends of that balance, the whole will be at rest. It is because no *reason* can be given why one side should weigh down rather than the other. Now by this single principle of the *Sufficient Reason*, may be demonstrated the Being of a God, and all the other parts of metaphysics or natural theology; and even in some measure those physical truths that are independent upon mathematics, such as the dynamical principles, or the principles of force."†

* [See Section Fifth.]

† [(Des Maizeaux's) *Collection of Papers*, &c.;—Leibnitz's *Second Paper*.]

Some of the inferences deduced by Leibnitz from this almost gratuitous assumption are so paradoxical, that one cannot help wondering he was not staggered about its certainty. Not only was he led to conclude that the mind is necessarily determined in all its elections by the greatest apparent good, insomuch that it would be impossible for it to make a choice between two things perfectly alike; but he had the boldness to extend this conclusion to the Deity, and to assert, that two things perfectly alike could not have been produced even by Divine Power. It was upon this ground that he rejected a *vacuum*, because all the parts of it would be perfectly like to each other; and that he also rejected the supposition of *atoms*, or similar particles of matter, and ascribed to each particle a *monad*, or active principle, by which it is discriminated from every other particle. The application of his principle, however, on which he evidently valued himself the most, was that to which I have already alluded,—the demonstrative evidence with which he conceived it to establish the impossibility of free-agency, not only in man, but in any other intelligent being;[1] a conclusion which, under whatever form of words it may be disguised, is liable to every objection which can be urged against the system of Spinoza.

[1] The following comment on this part of the Leibnitian system is from the pen of one of his greatest admirers, Charles Bonnet:—"Cette métaphysique transcendante deviendra un peu plus intelligible, si l'on fait attention, qu'en vertu du principe de la *raison suffisante*, tout est nécessairement lié dans l'univers. Toutes les actions des êtres simples sont harmoniques, ou subordonnées les unes aux autres. L'exercice actuel de l'activité d'une monade donnée, est déterminé par l'exercice actuel de l'activité des monades auxquelles elle corresponde immédiatement. Cette correspondance continue d'un point quelconque de l'univers jusqu'à ses extrémités. Représentez vous les ondes circulaires et concentriques qu'une pierre excite dans une eau dormante. Elles vont toujours en s'élargissant et en s'affoiblissant.

"Mais, l'état actuel d'une monade est nécessairement déterminé par son état antécédent; celui-ci par un état qui a précédé, ainsi en remontant jusqu'à l'instant de la création.

* * * * *

"Ainsi le passé, le présent, et le futur ne forment dans la même monade qu'une seul chaîne. Notre philosophe disoit ingénieusement, que *le présent est toujours gros de l'avenir*.

"Il disoit encore que l'Eternel Géomètre resolvoit sans cesse ce problême; l'état d'une monade etant donné, en déterminer l'état passé, présent, et futur de tout l'univers."—*Œuvres*, Tome VIII. pp. 303-305.—[4to edition.—*Vue du Leibnitianisme.*]

With respect to the principle from which these important consequences were deduced, it is observable that it is stated by Leibnitz in terms so general and vague as to extend to all the different departments of our knowledge; for he tells us that there must be a sufficient *reason* for every *existence*, for every *event*, and for every *truth*. This use of the word *reason* is so extremely equivocal, that it is quite impossible to annex any precise idea to the proposition. Of this it is unnecessary to produce any other proof than the application which is here made of it to things so very different as *existences*, *events*, and *truths*; in all of which cases it must of necessity have different meanings. It would be a vain attempt, therefore, to combat the maxim in the form in which it is generally appealed to. Nor indeed can we either adopt or reject it, without considering particularly how far it holds in the various instances to which it may be applied.

The multifarious discussions, however, of a physical,[1] a metaphysical, and a theological nature,* necessarily involved in so detailed an examination, would, in the present times, (even if this were a proper place for introducing them,) be equally useless and uninteresting. The peculiar opinions of Leibnitz on most questions connected with these sciences have already fallen into complete neglect. But as the maxim still continues to be quoted by the latest advocates for the scheme of Necessity, it may not be altogether superfluous to observe, that, when understood to refer to the changes which take place in the *material* universe, it coincides entirely with the common maxim,

[1] One of the happiest applications of this principle in physics that I know of, is in D'Alembert's Demonstration of the Composition of Forces, where the only axiom which he assumes is this,—that "if a body be acted upon by three equal forces, in directions forming equal angles with each other, it will necessarily remain at rest, there existing no *sufficient reason* why it should move in one direction rather than another." The same principle, too, is assumed in the ingenious reasoning employed by Stevinus, to prove "that a chain laid on an inclined plane, with a part of it hanging over at top in a perpendicular line, will be in *æquilibrio*, if the two ends of the chain reach down exactly to the same level."—See Mr. Playfair's *Dissertation in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica*, Part i. pp. 64, 65.—[First edition.]

* [In the MS. there is here appended a note identical with note 1 in p. 271 of *Dissertation*.—*Works*, Vol. I.]

that "every *change* implies the operation of a *cause;*" and that it is in consequence of its intuitive evidence in this particular case, that so many have been led to acquiesce in it in the unlimited terms in which Leibnitz has announced it. One thing will be readily granted, that the maxim, when applied to the determinations of intelligent and moral *agents*, is not *quite* so obvious and indisputable as when applied to the changes that take place in things altogether inanimate and passive.

What, then, it may be asked, induced Leibnitz, in the enunciation of his maxim, to depart from the form in which it has generally been stated, and to substitute, instead of the word *cause* the word *reason*, which is certainly not only the more unusual, but the more ambiguous expression of the two? Was it not evidently a perception of the impropriety of calling the motives from which we act the *causes* of our actions; or at least of the inconsistency of this language with the common ideas and feelings of mankind? The word *reason* is *here* much less suspicious, and much more likely to pass current without examination. It was therefore with no small dexterity that Leibnitz contrived to express his general principle in such a manner, that the impropriety of his language should be most apparent in that case in which the proposition is instantaneously admitted by every reader as self-evident; and to adapt it, in its most precise and definite shape, to the case in which it was in the greatest danger of undergoing a severe scrutiny. In this respect he has managed his argument with more address than Collins, or Edwards, or Hume, all of whom have applied the maxim to *Mind*, in the very same words in which it is usually applied to inanimate Matter.

Let us examine, therefore, Leibnitz's principle as applicable to the determinations of the will, and consider what it implies, and how far it is agreeable to fact. And for this purpose it is necessary to attend to the various senses in which it may be understood: for although it is in this case that the author's expressions are the least exceptionable, they are yet far from being limited to one interpretation.

1. When it is said, that for every voluntary action there

must have been a sufficient reason, the proposition may be understood merely to imply that every such action must have had a *cause*. And we may remark by the way, that this is the only interpretation of which the proposition admits, if the word *reason* be used in the same sense in which alone Leibnitz's maxim is applicable to inanimate matter. But in this sense of the proposition it does not at all affect the question about Liberty and Necessity; for it only implies that the action is an effect, which either proceeded from the free-will of the agent, (in which case he may justly be said to be the cause of the effect,) or which did not proceed from his free-will, (in which case it must ultimately be referred to some other cause.)

2. The principle of the *Sufficient Reason*, when applied to our voluntary actions, may be understood to imply, that the will is necessarily determined by the greatest apparent good. As this proposition is not peculiar to the system of Leibnitz, it may be proper to state it more fully.

The circumstances of our external situation, (it has been said,) and the state of our appetites, desires, &c., at any particular time, evidently do not depend on us. Suppose, then, that I am under the influence of any two active principles which urge me in different directions, and that I deliberate which of them I am to obey: The conclusion my understanding forms on this subject does not depend on me, and this conclusion necessarily determines my will; for it is impossible for a man not to do what appears to him to be, on the whole, the best and most eligible thing at the moment. My will, therefore, in every case, depends as little on myself as the conclusion of my understanding when I give my assent to a mathematical demonstration.

The flaw of this reasoning, I apprehend, lies in that step in which it is affirmed, that the will is necessarily determined by what appears to us to be *best* and most *eligible* at the moment; —and the only circumstance which gives the proposition the smallest degree of plausibility is the ambiguity of the language in which it is stated. For it may either imply that our volitions are necessarily agreeable to what we *will* at the time; in

which case we only assert an identical proposition: Or that the will is necessarily determined by what appears to us to be *morally* best and really most *eligible* at the time; in which case we assert what is contrary to fact.

3. The meaning of the proposition now under consideration may be understood to be this, that for every action there must be a motive.

I have already said, that in this sense I am disposed to admit the maxim. Dr. Reid, indeed, has very confidently maintained the negative;* but I do not think, (as I formerly observed, [p. 355,]) that by doing so he has strengthened his cause; for he confesses that the actions which are performed without motives are perfectly trifling and insignificant: nay, he acknowledges that the merit of an action depends entirely on the motive from which it was performed.

But although we grant this general proposition, it certainly does not follow from it that man is a *necessary* agent. The question is not concerning the *influence* of motives, but concerning the *nature* of that influence. The advocates for Necessity represent it as the influence of a cause in producing its effect. The advocates for Liberty acknowledge that the motive is the *occasion* of acting, or the *reason* for acting; but contend that it is so far from being the efficient cause of it, that it supposes the efficiency to exist elsewhere, viz., in the mind of the agent. Between these two opinions there is an essential distinction. The one represents man merely as a passive instrument. According to the other, he is really an *agent*, and the sole author of his own actions. He acts, indeed, from motives, but he has the power of choice among different ones. When he acts from a particular motive, it is not because this motive is *stronger* than others, but because he *willed* to act in this way. Indeed, it may be questioned if the word *strength* conveys any idea when applied to motives. It is obviously an analogical or metaphorical expression, borrowed from a class of phenomena essentially different.

"Undoubtedly, nothing is," says Dr. Clarke, "without a

* [*On the Active Powers*, Essay IV. chap. iv.—*Works*, p. 609.]

Sufficient Reason why it *is* rather than *not*, and why it is *thus* rather than *otherwise*. But in things in their own nature indifferent, mere *will*, without anything external to influence it, is alone *that Sufficient Reason*. As in the instance of God's creating or placing any particle of matter in *one* place rather than in *another*, when all places are originally alike."*

With this observation of Clarke's, the following passages from Boscovich coincide. They are taken from his Notes on [Supplements to] the Latin Poem of Benedictus Stay, *De Systemate Mundi*, [and refer to the Leibnitian *Principle of Indiscernibles*.]

"Eodem pacto sine ulla etiam ratione quam nos excogitare possimus, ex omnino similibus potuit Deus seligere potius aliqua quam alia, et ex iis quæ selegit alia alibi collocare, ut ex prorsus similibus materiæ punctis, aliud in sole, aliud in Sirio, quorum similium bina etiam haberi in mundo nequaquam posse Leibnitiani affirmant, quia discerni a se invicem non possent, nec haberi posset ratio sufficiens, cur primum secundi loco collocatum non esset, et vice versa. Discernere poterit Deus ipsa etiam prorsus similia, si illam intimam cujusque naturam, quam *individuationem* dicimus, videat per quam hoc non est illud. Eam autem ipsam sine ulla dissimilitudine Divinæ sapientiæ oculos effugere, quis affirmet? Porro ratio cur hæc potius hic quam alibi collocata sit, physica erit semper aliqua nimirum ipsa actio Divina qua collocatur. Moralis nulla erit *cur potius*, sed libertas, et ipsa voluntas Divina stabit pro ratione. Sic etiam, ubi nos aliquid eligimus, electionis physica ratio erit ipsa voluntas nostra volitionem producens, moralis erit semper aliqua, cum voluntas in incognitum non feratur, nec sine motivo operetur, sed non erit ratio, cur potius eligat quam non eligat, verum motivis omnibus, sive moralibus rationibus consideratis, supererit facultas, eo se inclinandi, ubi etiam minus ponderis rationes habent; ut accuratissime verum sit illud: *Video meliora* (et eodem etiam pacto *jucundiora, utiliora*) *proboque; deteriora sequor*."†

The point on which this celebrated controversy between

* [*Collection of Papers*, &c.—Clarke's Third Reply, sect. ii.]

† [*Supplementum* IV. ad librum primum, § xxxiii. Vol. I. p. 282.]

Leibnitz and Clarke turns, is very clearly and precisely defined by Maclaurin in his *Account of Newton's Discoveries*. "Leibnitz," he observes, "makes great use of a comparison between the effects of opposite motives on the mind, and of weights placed in the scales of a balance, or of powers acting upon the same body with contrary directions. His learned antagonist denies that there is a similitude between a balance moved by weights and a mind acting upon the view of certain motives; because the one is entirely passive, and the other not only is acted upon, but acts also. The mind, he owns, is purely passive in receiving the impressions of the motive, which is only a perception, and is not to be confounded with the power of acting after, or in consequence of that perception. The difference between a man and a machine does not consist only in sensation and intelligence, but in his power of acting also. The balance, for want of this power, cannot move at all when the weights are equal; but a Free agent, (says he,) when there appear two perfectly alike reasonable ways of acting, has still within itself a power of choosing; and it may have strong and very good reasons not to forbear the exercise of this power, although there may be no *reason* whatever to determine the choice in favour of one rather than of the other. It is evident that, as it is from internal consciousness I know anything of Liberty, so no assertion contrary to what I am conscious of concerning it can be admitted; and it were better perhaps to treat of this abstruse subject after the manner of experimental philosophy, than to fill a thousand pages with metaphysical discussions concerning it. . . . Let any man reflect on his own thoughts, from which alone any notions we have of Liberty can be derived; and if he is satisfied that he could choose between two desirable things that appear equally good, rather than want both, Leibnitz's argument (drawn from the principle of *the Sufficient Reason*) can have no force upon him."[1]

[1] Book II. chap. iv.

SECT. V.—DEFENCE OF THE SCHEME OF NECESSITY BY COLLINS AND EDWARDS.—CONTRAST BETWEEN THEIR VIEWS AND THOSE OF LATER NECESSITARIANS.

I have already said, [p. 357,] that, in the opinion of Clarke, the scheme of Necessity, when pushed to its logical consequences, must ultimately terminate in Spinozism. It seems to have been the great aim of Collins to vindicate his favourite scheme from this reproach, and to retaliate upon the partisans of Free-will the charges of favouring atheism and immorality. In proof of this, I have only to quote the account given by the author himself of the plan of his work.*

"Too much care cannot be taken to prevent being misunderstood and prejudged in handling questions of such nice speculation as those of Liberty and Necessity; and, therefore, though I might in justice expect to be read before any judgment be passed on me, I think it proper to premise the following observations:—

"*First*, Though I deny *liberty* in a certain meaning of that word, yet I contend for *liberty*, as it signifies a power in man to do as he wills or pleases. . . .

"*Secondly*, When I affirm *necessity*, I contend only for *moral necessity*, meaning thereby that man, who is an intelligent and sensible being, is determined by his reason and his senses; and I deny man to be subject to such necessity, as is in clocks, watches, and such other beings, which, for want of sensation and intelligence, are subject to an absolute, physical, or mechanical necessity. . . .

"*Thirdly*, I have undertaken to show, that the notions I advance are so far from being inconsistent with, that they are the sole foundations of morality and laws, and of rewards and punishments in society; and that the notions I explode are subversive of them."[1] . . .

* [*Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty*—Preface.]

[1] Whoever has looked into the writings of Priestley and his followers must be instantly sensible how very different their spirit is from that of the above

In the prosecution of his argument on this question, Collins endeavours to show that "*Man is a necessary agent:** 1. From our *experience.* (By experience he means our own consciousness that we *are* necessary agents.) 2. From the *impossibility of liberty.* [3. From the *imperfection of liberty*, and the *perfection of necessity.—Ed.*] 4. From the consideration of the *Divine prescience.* 5. From the nature and use of *rewards and punishments.* And, 6. From the nature of *morality.*"[1]

quotation; and yet they uniformly appeal to Collins and Edwards as their great oracles upon this question. Nor is this change in the Necessitarian creed at all wonderful; for it must be owned that the objections urged by Collins and Edwards to the doctrine of Free-will are of an incomparably more imposing and popular nature, than the very subtile and shadowy arguments by which they have tried to reconcile their scheme with man's moral agency; and, accordingly, I will venture to say, that, among the proselytes they have gained to the first part of their creed, there is not one in a hundred who will subscribe to the second. In this point of view I am afraid that Edwards's book (however well meant) has done much harm in England, as it has secured a favourable hearing to the same doctrines, which, since the time of Clarke, had been generally ranked among the most dangerous errors of Hobbes and his disciples.

* [See his *Inquiry* and its Table of Contents, in detail.]

[1] To the arguments of Collins against man's Free-agency some of his late followers have added the inconsistency of this doctrine with the known *effects of education*, (under which phrase they comprehend also the moral effects of all the external circumstances in which men are involuntarily placed,) in forming the characters of individuals.

The plausibility of this argument (on which so much stress has been laid by Priestley and others) arises entirely from the mixture of truth which it involves; or, to express myself more correctly, from the evidence and importance of *the fact* on which it proceeds, when that fact is stated with due limitations.

That the influence of *education* in this comprehensive sense of the word was greatly underrated by our ancestors is now universally acknowledged, and it is to Locke's writings, more than to any other single cause, that the change in public opinion on this head is to be ascribed. On various occasions he has expressed himself very strongly with respect to the *extent* of this influence, and has more than once intimated his belief, that the great majority of men continue through life what early education had made them. In making use, however, of this strong language, his object (as is evident from the opinions which he has avowed in other parts of his works) was only to arrest the attention of his readers to the practical lessons he was anxious to inculcate; and not to state a metaphysical *fact* which was to be literally and rigorously interpreted in the controversy about Liberty and Necessity. The only sound and useful *moral* to be drawn from the *spirit* of his observation is, the duty of gratitude to Heaven for all the blessings, in respect of education and of external situation, which have fallen to our own lot; the impossibility of ascertaining the involuntary misfortunes by which the seeming demerits of others may have been in part occasioned, and in the

In this view of the subject, and indeed in the very selection of his premises, it is remarkable how completely Collins has anticipated Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the most celebrated, and indisputably the ablest champion, in later times, of the scheme of Necessity. The coincidence is so perfect, that the outline given by the former of the plan of his work might have served with equal propriety as a preface to that of the latter.

From the above summary, and still more from the whole tenor of the *Philosophical Inquiry*, it is evident that Collins (one of the most obnoxious writers of his days to divines of all denominations) was not less solicitous than his successor, Edwards, to reconcile his metaphysical notions with man's accountableness and moral agency. The remarks, accordingly, of Clarke upon Collins's work* are equally applicable to that of Edwards. It is to be regretted that they seem never to have fallen into the hands of this very acute and candid reasoner. As for Collins, it is a remarkable circumstance that he

same proportion diminished; and the consequent obligation upon ourselves to think as charitably as possible of their conduct under the most unfavourable appearances. The truth of all this I conceive to be implied in these words of Scripture, "To whom much is given of them much will be required;" and, if possible, still more explicitly and impressively in the *Parable* of the *Talents*.

Is not the use which has been made by Necessitarians of Locke's *Treatise on Education*, and other books of a similar tendency, only one instance more of that disposition, so common among metaphysical sciolists, to conceal from the world their incapacity to add to the stock of useful knowledge, by appropriating to themselves the conclusions of their wiser and more sober predecessors, under the startling and imposing disguise of universal maxims, admitting neither of exception nor restriction? It is thus that Locke's judicious and refined remarks on the *Association of Ideas* have been exaggerated to such an extreme in the coarse caricatures of Hartley and of Priestley, as to bring among cautious inquirers some degree of discredit on one of the most important doctrines of modern philosophy. Or, to take another case still more in point, it is thus that Locke's reflections on the effects of *education* in modifying the intellectual faculties, and (where skilfully conducted) in supplying their original defects, have been distorted into the puerile paradox of Helvetius, that the mental capacities of the whole human race are the same at the moment of birth. It is sufficient for me here to throw out these hints, which will be found to apply equally to a large proportion of other theories started by modern metaphysicians.

* [See Clarke's *Remarks upon a book entitled "A Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty,"* 1717.]

attempted no reply to this tract of Clarke's, although he lived twelve years after its publication.* The reasonings contained in it, together with those on the same subject in his correspondence with Leibnitz, and in his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, form, in my humble opinion, the most important, as well as powerful, of all his metaphysical arguments.[1] The adversaries with whom he had to contend were both of them eminently distinguished by ingenuity and subtlety, and he seems to have put forth to the utmost his logical strength, in contending with such antagonists. "The Liberty or moral agency of man," says his friend Dr. Hoadley, "was a darling point to him. He excelled always and showed a superiority to all, whenever it came into private discourse or public debate. But he never more excelled than when he was pressed with the strength Leibnitz was master of; which made him exert all his talents to set it once again in a clear light, to guard it against the evil of metaphysical obscurities, and to give the finishing stroke to a subject which must ever be the foundation of morality in man, and is the ground of the accountableness of intelligent creatures for all their actions."

It is needless to say, that neither Leibnitz nor Collins admitted the fairness of the inferences which Clarke conceived to follow from the scheme of Necessity. But almost every page in the subsequent history of this controversy may be regarded as an additional illustration of the soundness of Clarke's reasonings, and of the sagacity with which he anticipated the fatal errors likely to ensue from the system which he opposed.

"Thus," says a very learned and pious disciple of Leibnitz, who made his first appearance as an author about thirty years

* [This is not correct. Collins did answer, but not during Clarke's life. See a note on this subject at the close of the present volume.—W. Ed. Vol. I. p. 367.]

[1] We think, that for all probability never read either Clarke or Collins, has said: but the former replied to the latter only by theological reasonings. Clarke *a répondu à Collins qu'en Théologien.*"—(*Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*, Art. LIBERTÉ.) Nothing can be more remote from the truth. The argument of Clarke is wholly metaphysical, whereas his antagonist in various instances has attempted to wrest to his own purposes the words of Scripture.

after the death of his master,[1]—"Thus the same chain embraces the physical and moral worlds, binds the past to the present, the present to the future, the future to eternity."

"That wisdom which has ordained the existence of this chain has doubtless willed that of every link of which it is composed. A CALIGULA is one of those links, and this link is of iron. A MARCUS AURELIUS is another link, and this link is of gold. *Both* are necessary parts of one whole which could not but exist. Shall God then be angry at the sight of the iron link? What absurdity! God esteems this link at its proper value: He sees it in its cause; and he approves this cause, for it is good. God beholds moral monsters as he beholds physical monsters. Happy is the link of gold! Still more happy if he know that he is *only fortunate*.[2] He has attained the highest degree of moral perfection, and is nevertheless without pride, knowing that what he is, is the necessary result of the place which he must occupy in the chain."

"The Gospel is the allegorical exposition of this system; the simile of the Potter is its summary."[3]

In what essential respect does this system differ from that of Spinoza? Is it not even more dangerous in its practical tendency, in consequence of the high strain of mystical devotion by which it is exalted?

This objection, however, does not apply to the quotations which follow. They exhibit, without any colouring of imagination or of enthusiasm, the scheme of necessity pushed to the remotest and most alarming conclusions which it appeared to Clarke to involve; and as they express the serious and avowed creed of two of our contemporaries, (both of them men of distinguished talents,) may be regarded as a proof, that the zeal displayed by Clarke against the metaphysical principles which

[1] Charles Bonnet, born 1720, died 1793.

[2] The words in the original are—"Heureux le chaînon d'or! plus *heureux* encore, s'il sait qu'il n'est qu' *heureux*." The double meaning of *heureux*, if it render the expression less logically precise, gives it at least an epigrammatic turn which cannot be preserved in our language.

[3] Bonnet, *Œuvres*, Tom. VIII. pp. 287, 288. [quarto edition.—*Principes Philosophiques*, Chap. vii.]

led ultimately to such results, was not so unfounded as some worthy and able inquirers have supposed.

"*All that is must be*," says the Baron de Grimm, addressing himself to the Duke of Saxe-Gotha,—"all that is must be, even because it is; this is the only sound philosophy; as long as we do not know this universe *a priori*, (as they say in the schools,) ALL IS NECESSITY.[1] Liberty is a word without meaning, as you will see in the letter of M. Diderot."

The following passage is extracted from Diderot's letter here referred to.

"I am now, my dear friend, going to quit the tone of a preacher, to take, if I can, that of a philosopher. Examine it narrowly, and you will see that the word *Liberty* is a word devoid of meaning;[2] that there are not, and that there cannot be free beings; that we are only what accords with the general order, with our organization, our education, and the chain of events. These dispose of us invincibly. We can no more conceive a being acting without a motive, than we can one of the arms of a balance acting without a weight. The motive is always exterior and foreign, fastened upon us by some cause distinct from ourselves. What deceives us, is the prodigious variety of our actions, joined to the habit which we catch at our birth, of confounding the Voluntary and the Free. We have been so often praised and blamed, and have so often praised and blamed others, that we contract an inveterate prejudice of believing that we and they *will* and act freely. But if there is no liberty, there is no action that merits either praise or blame; neither vice nor virtue; nothing that ought either to be rewarded or punished. What, then, is the distinction among men? The doing of good and the doing of ill! The doer of ill is one who must be destroyed or punished. The doer of good is lucky, not virtuous. But though neither the doer of

[1] With all due deference to Baron de Grimm, the logical inference ought undoubtedly to have been, "as long as we know nothing of the universe *a priori*, we are not entitled to say of anything that it either is or is not necessary."

[2] Does not this remark of Diderot apply with infinitely greater force to the word *necessity*, as employed in this controversy?

good nor of ill be free, man is nevertheless a being to be modified; it is for this reason the doer of ill should be destroyed upon the scaffold. From thence the good effects of education, of pleasure, of grief, of grandeur, of poverty, &c.; from thence a philosophy full of pity, strongly attached to the good, nor more angry with the wicked, than with the whirlwind which fills one's eyes with dust. Strictly speaking, there is but one sort of causes, that is, *physical* causes. *There is but one sort of Necessity, which is the same for all beings.*[1] This is what reconciles me to human kind; it is for this reason I exhort you to philanthropy. Adopt these principles if you think them good, or show me that they are bad. If you adopt them, they will reconcile *you*, too, with others and with yourself; you will neither be pleased nor angry with yourself for being what you are. Reproach others for nothing, and repent of nothing; this is the first step to wisdom. Besides this, all is prejudice and false philosophy."*

The same doctrines have been recently introduced into this country, and I have no doubt with sincerely good intentions, by a very different class of philosophers, the greater part of whom have laboured hard to dispute the connexion between the premises and the conclusion. Not so [Dr. Priestley and] Mr. Belsham. "*Remorse*," says he, [the latter,] "is the exquisitely painful feeling which arises from the belief that, in circumstances precisely the same, we might have chosen and acted differently. This *fallacious* feeling is superseded by the doctrine of Necessity."[2] And again: "The doctrine of philosophical Necessity supersedes *remorse*, so far as remorse is founded upon the belief, that in the same previous circumstances it was possible to have acted otherwise."[3]

In another part of Mr. Belsham's work the following observation occurs.

"*Remorse* supposes Free-will. It arises from forgetfulness of the precise state of mind when the action was performed.

[1] See [above,] p. 365.

* [*Correspondance de M. Grimm*, I. Partie, tome i. pp. 300, 304, 305, 306. Londres, 1814.—The original will be found in Note P P. of *Dissertation.*—*Works*, Vol. I. p. 580.]

[2] *Elements*, p. 284.

[3] Ibid. p. 307.

It is of little or no use in moral discipline. In a degree it is even pernicious."[1]

As to our moral sentiments concerning the conduct and character of our fellow-creatures, Mr. Belsham is of opinion that the doctrine of Necessity conciliates good will to men. "By teaching us to look up to God as the prime agent, and the proper cause of everything that happens, and to regard men as nothing more than instruments which he employs for accomplishing his good pleasure, it tends to suppress all resentment, malice, and revenge; while it induces us to regard our worst enemies with compassion rather than with hatred, and to return good for evil."[2]

From these extracts it appears that Mr. Belsham is not only himself convinced of the truth of the doctrine of Necessity, considered as a philosophical dogma, but that he conceives it would be for the advantage of the world, if all mankind were to become converts to his way of thinking. In this respect his system is certainly much more of a piece than that of Lord Kames, who, although he adopts zealously the doctrine of Necessity, and represents the argument in support of it as demonstrative, yet candidly acknowledges that our natural feelings are adverse to that doctrine; and even goes so far as to say, that without such a feeling the business of society could not be carried on. In this dilemma he attempts to reconcile the two opinions, by the supposition of a *deceitful* sense of Liberty. We are so formed as to believe that we are Free agents, when in truth we are mere machines, acting only so far as we are acted upon.[3]

[1] *Elements*, p. 406.

[2] Ibid. p. 316.

"The doctrine of Necessity," says likewise Dr. Hartley, "has a tendency to abate all resentment against men. Since all they do against us is by the appointment of God, it is rebellion against him to be offended with them."*

[3] [In these views of the practical tendency of the Necessitarian creed, there is a wonderful coincidence between the opinions of Hartley and Belsham, with those of the late French Necessitarians.]—The very same hypothesis is adopted by the Abbé Galiani, as the only satisfactory solution of the difficulties connected with this subject. "Voudriez vous savoir," says he to one of his

* [*Observations on Man*, Part I. Conclusion. 8vo editions, Vol. I. p. 510. Priestley's *Abridgment*, p. 344.]

Perhaps no opinion on the subject of Necessity was ever offered to the public which excited more general opposition than this hypothesis of a *deceitful sense;* and yet, if the argument for necessity be admitted, I do not see any other supposition which can possibly reconcile the conclusions of our reason, with the feelings of which every man is conscious. *Not* that I would insinuate any apology for a doctrine, the absurdity of which is not only obvious but ludicrous, inasmuch as it involves the supposition, that the Deity *intended* that his creatures should believe themselves to be Free-agents; and that, while the great mass of mankind were thus deceived to their own advantage, a few minds of a superior order had the metaphysical sagacity to detect the imposition. Nor is this all. If the doctrine of Necessity be just, it must one day or another become the universal and popular creed of mankind, as every doctrine which is true, and more especially every doctrine which is supported by demonstrative evidence, may be expected to become in the progress of human reason. What will *then* become of the great concerns of human life? Will man, as he improves in knowledge, be unfitted for the ends of his being, and exhibit an inconsistency between his reasoning faculties

correspondents, Madame de l'Epinay, "mon avis sur cette question? La persuasion de la Liberté constitue l'essence de l'homme. On pourroit même définir l'homme *un animal qui se croit libre*, et ce seroit une définition complète. Il est absolument impossible à l'homme d'oublier un seul instant, et de renoncer à la persuasion qu'il a d'être libre. Voilà donc un premier point: être persuadé d'être libre est-il la même chose qu'être libre en effet? Je réponds: ce n'est point la même chose, mais elle produit absolument les mêmes effets en morale. L'homme est donc libre, puisqu'il est intimement persuadé de l'être, et que cela vaut tout autant que la liberté. Voilà donc le mécanisme de l'univers expliqué clair comme de l'eau de roche! S'il y avoit un seul être libre dans l'univers, il n'y auroit plus de Dieu; il n'y auroit plus de liaisons entre les êtres. L'univers se détraqueroit; et si l'homme n'étoit pas essentiellement, intimement convaincu d'être libre, le moral humain n'iroit plus comme il va. La conviction de la liberté suffit pour établir une conscience, un remords, une justice, des récompenses, et des peines. Elle suffit à tout. Et voilà le monde expliqué en deux mots."—*Correspondance inédite* de l'Abbé Galiani, Tome I. pp. 339, 340. A Paris, 1818.

I record this as a precious specimen of the flippant metaphysics of a once fashionable *Philosophe* and Abbé in the Salons of Paris. See a lively and amusing portrait of him in Marmontel's *Memoirs*, Vol. II. pp. 121-123.

and his active principles, contrary to the invariable analogy of that systematical and harmonious design which is everywhere else so conspicuous in the works of nature ?[1]

Lord Kames, who was a most sincere inquirer after truth, abandoned, in the *last* [or third] edition of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*, the doctrine of a *deceitful sense of Liberty ;* and in so doing gave a rare example of candour and fairness as a reasoner. But I am very doubtful if the alterations which he made in his scheme did not impair the merits which in its original concoction it possessed in point of consistency. The first edition of this work appeared when the author was in the full vigour of his faculties. The last when he was approaching to fourscore.

[Even Bolingbroke, whose philosophy has been justly suspected of leaning towards Fatalism, does not deny that we have the evidence of consciousness in favour of our Free-agency. "The *Free-will* of man which no one can deny that he has, without *lying*, or renouncing his intuitive knowledge."][2]

SECT. VI.—IS THE EVIDENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN FAVOUR OF THE SCHEME OF FREE-WILL, OR OF THAT OF NECESSITY ?[3]

In what I have hitherto said upon the subject, I have proceeded on the supposition, that the doctrine of Free-will is

[1] This argument is very ably and forcibly stated in a small pamphlet by the late learned and ingenious Mr. Dawson of Sedbergh, [entitled—*The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity briefly invalidated.*]

[2] Bolingbroke, *Philosophical Works*, Vol. V. p. 406, [? Vol. V. 8vo, London, 1777, p. 85.—*Fragments or Minutes of Essays*, LXII. See above, p. 340.]

[3] It has been lately said by a very ingenious and acute writer,* that "in the controversy concerning Liberty and Necessity, the *only* question at issue between the disputants related to *a matter of fact*, on which they both appealed to the evidence of consciousness: namely, whether all previous circumstances being the same, the choice of man be not also at all times the same."—*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. XXVII. p. 228.

If the author of this observation had contented himself with saying that this question concerning *the matter of fact*, as ascertained by the evidence of consciousness, *ought* to have been considered as the *only* point at issue between the contending parties, I should most readily have subscribed to his proposition. Indeed, I have expressed myself very nearly to the same purpose in a former work.—(*Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. pp. 74, 75, 3d edit.)—

* [Sir James Mackintosh, 1815, in a Criticism of Mr Stewart's *Dissertation*, Part I.]

consistent with the common feelings and belief of mankind. That "all our actions do now, in experience, *seem* to us to be *free*, exactly in the same manner as they would do upon the supposition of our being really free agents," is remarked by Clarke in his reply to Collins: "And consequently," he adds, "though this alone does not amount to a strict demonstration of our being free, yet it leaves on the other side of the question nothing but a *bare possibility* of our being so framed by the

[*Supra*, *Works*, Vol. III. p. 55, *seq.*] But if it is to be understood as a historical statement of the manner in which the controversy has always or even most frequently been carried on, I must beg leave to dissent from it very widely. How many arguments against the freedom of the will have been in all ages drawn from the *prescience* of the Deity! How many still continue to be drawn by very eminent divines from the doctrines of predestination and of eternal decrees! Has not Mr. Locke himself acknowledged the impression which the former of these considerations made on his mind! "I own," says he, "freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that though it be unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God our Maker, and though *I cannot have a clearer perception of any thing than that I am free*, yet I cannot make freedom in man consistent with omnipotence and omniscience in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truth I most firmly assent to; and therefore I have long since given off the consideration of that question, resolving all into this short conclusion,—*that if it be possible for God to make a free agent, then man is free*, though I see not the way of it."*

A still more recent exception to the general assertion, which has given occasion to this note, occurs in Lord Kames's hypothesis of a *deceitful sense of liberty*, as maintained in the *first* [and second] edition[s] of his *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*. Here upon the faith of some subtile metaphysical reasonings the very ingenious author adopts the scheme of necessity in direct opposition to the evidence which he candidly confesses that consciousness affords of our Free-agency. Even the latest advocates for Necessity, Priestley and Belsham, as well as their predecessor, Collins himself, while they appealed (in the very words of the learned critic) to the evidence of consciousness in proof of the fact, *that all previous circumstances being the same, the choice of man is also at all times the same*, yet thought it worth their while to strengthen this conclusion by calling to their aid the theological doctrines already mentioned. I cannot, therefore, see with what colour of plausibility it can be said that "this matter of fact has been the *only* question at issue between the disputants."

It may, however, be regarded as one great step gained in this controversy, if it may henceforth be assumed as a principle agreed on by both parties, that this is the *only* question which can be philosophically stated on the subject, and that all arguments drawn from the attributes of the Deity are entirely foreign to the discussion. I shall accordingly devote this section to an examination of *the fact*, agreeably to the representation of it given by our modern Necessitarians.

* [*Letter to Molyneux.*]

Author of Nature, as to be unavoidably deceived in this matter by every experience and every action we perform. The case is exactly the same," continues Dr. Clarke, " as in that notable question, *whether the world exists or no?* There is no demonstration of it from experience. There always remains *a bare possibility*, that the Supreme Being may have so framed my mind, as that I shall always necessarily be deceived in every one of my perceptions, as in a dream, though possibly there be *no material world* nor any other creature, whatsoever existing, besides myself. Of this I say there always remains *a bare possibility*, and yet no man in his senses argues from thence, that experience is no proof to us of *the existence of things.*"* In farther confirmation of this remark of Clarke's, let us attend to the inconsistency of the scheme of Necessity, with the feelings of which we are conscious, while under the influence of remorse. The argument arising from this consideration is very forcibly stated by Cicero. " Si omnia fato fiunt, omnia fiunt causa antecedente: et, si appetitus; illa etiam quæ appetitum sequuntur; ergo etiam assensiones. At, si causa appetitus non est sita in nobis, ne ipse quidem appetitus est in nostra potestate. Quod si ita est, ne illa quidem quæ appetitu efficiuntur sunt sita in nobis. Non sunt igitur neque assensiones neque actiones in nostra potestate: ex quo efficitur, ut nec laudationes justæ sint, nec vituperationes, nec honores, nec supplicia. Quod cum vitiosum sit, probabiliter concludi putant, non omnia fato fieri quæcunque fiant."[1]

* [*Remarks upon a Book intituled " A Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty;"* edit. Lond. 1717, pp. 19, 20.—Answer to the First Argument.]

[1] *De Fato*, Cap. xvii.

The above quotation leads me to take notice of what I consider as a very remarkable and important distinction between the reasonings of the ancient and of the modern Necessitarians. Among the latter the argument commonly begins with a scholastic discussion concerning the *motives* of our actions, and the influence of these motives in determining the will; an influence which they assert to be precisely the same with that of any other cause in producing its effect. And it is from these premises that the inference is drawn in favour either of the scheme of Necessity or of that of Fatalism, according to the theological views of their respective abettors. By the ancient Necessitarians, on the other hand, the scheme of Fatalism, which was closely interwoven with the whole texture of Pagan mythology, was assumed as a

If the scheme of Necessity had never received another answer, this alone would have been a sufficient one, admitting only the propriety of introducing into the other sciences the same kind of indirect demonstration which is employed in mathematics. In this case, our reasonings on the supposition of necessity, lead to a conclusion directly contrary to the most irresistible of all evidence, that of *our own consciousness*.

But this appeal to *consciousness* in proof of Free-agency proceeds altogether (according to some *late* writers) on a partial and superficial view of the subject; the evidence of *consciousness*, when all circumstances are taken into the account and duly weighed, being decidedly in favour of the scheme of Necessity.

Dr. Hartley was, I believe, one of the first (if not the first) who denied that our consciousness is in favour of our Free-agency. "It is true," he observes, "that a man by internal feeling may prove his own Free-will, if by Free-will be meant the power of doing what a man wills or desires; or of resisting the motives of sensuality, ambition, &c., that is, Free-will in the popular and practical sense. Every person may easily recollect instances where he has done these several things, but

first principle; and it was from this principle they deduced their proof that man must be a necessary agent. Their process of reasoning, therefore, was precisely the reverse of that of the moderns, the former employing Fatalism to prove the necessary influence of motives:—"Ne Apollinem quidem futura posse dicere, nisi ea, quorum causas natura ita contineret, ut ea fieri necesse esset." (*De Fato*, Cap. xiv.): while the latter urges the necessary influence of motives in proof of Fatalism. Accordingly, in the passage just quoted from Cicero, the consequences which the scheme of Fatalism involves, and the repugnance of these consequences to the universal sentiments of mankind, are represented as a demonstration, in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum*, that this scheme cannot be true. This clear perception, however, of the inconsistency of Fatalism with man's accountableness or moral agency, there is good reason to believe, was confined to a very few enlightened inquirers, while Fatalism continued to be the professed creed of the priesthood, and the real creed of the multitude. Cicero tells us expressly, that in his time it was an article of faith among all the old women in Rome, "Aniculis fato fieri omnia videntur."—(*De Nat. Deor.* II. xv.) This remark, I am inclined to suspect, is equally applicable to the old women (male and female) of modern Europe.

these are entirely foreign to the present question. To prove that a man has Free-will in the sense opposite to mechanism, he ought to feel that he can do different things while the motives remain precisely the same. And here, I apprehend, the internal feelings are entirely against Free-will, where the motives are of a sufficient magnitude to be evident: where they are not, nothing can be proved."[1]

Mr. Belsham has enlarged still more fully on this subject. "When men," says he, "who have been guilty of a crime review the action in calmer moments, when the strength of passion has subsided, and the contrary motives appear in all their force, and perhaps magnified by the evil consequences of their vice and folly, they are ready to think, that they might at the time have thought and acted as they now think and act: but this is a fallacious feeling, and arises from their not placing themselves in circumstances exactly similar."[2] We are elsewhere told by Mr. Belsham, that "the popular opinion, that in many cases it was in the power of the agent to have chosen differently, the previous circumstances remaining exactly the same, arises either from a mistake of the question, from a *forgetfulness of the motives by which our choice was determined*, or from the extreme difficulty of placing ourselves in imagination in circumstances exactly similar to those in which the election was made."[3] And still more explicitly and concisely in the following aphorism:—"The pretended consciousness of Free-will amounts to nothing more than forgetfulness of the motive."[4]—To the same purpose Dr. Priestley has expressed himself: "A man, when he reproaches himself for any *particular action* in his past conduct, may fancy that, if he was in the same situation again, he would have acted differently. But this is a mere *deception;* and if he examines himself *strictly*, and takes in all circumstances, he may be satisfied that, with the *same inward disposition of mind*, and with precisely the *same views of things* that he had then, and exclusive of all others that he has acquired by

[1] *Observations on Man*, Vol. I. p. 507, [8vo editions; Part I. Conclusion. —Priestley's *Abridgment*, p. 335.]

[2] *Elements*, p. 279.

[3] Ibid. p. 306.

[4] Ibid. p. 278.

reflection *since*, he could not have acted otherwise than he did."[1]

If these statements be accurately examined, they will be found to resolve entirely into this identical proposition, that the *will* of the criminal, being supposed to remain in the same state as when the crime was committed, he could not have *willed* and acted otherwise. This proposition, it is obvious, does not at all touch the cardinal point in question, which is simply this; whether, all OTHER circumstances remaining the same, the criminal had it not in his power to abstain from willing the commission of the crime. The vagueness of Priestley's language upon this occasion must not be overlooked; the words *inward disposition of mind* admitting of a variety of different meanings, and in this instance being plainly intended to include the act of the will, as well as everything else connected with the criminal action.

In the above strictures on these two redoubtable logicians, I have been partly anticipated by the following very acute remarks of Dr. Magee on the definitions of *Volition* and of *Philosophical Liberty*, prefixed to Mr. Belsham's discussion of the doctrines now under our consideration.

"Volition," says Mr. Belsham, "is that state of mind which is immediately *previous* to actions which are called voluntary. . . *Natural Liberty*, or, as it is more properly called, *Philosophical Liberty, or Liberty of Choice*, is the power of doing an action or its contrary, *all the previous circumstances remaining the same*."*—"Now here," says Dr. Magee, "is the point of Free-will at once decided; for *Volition* itself being included among

[1] *Illustrations of Philosophical Necessity*, p. 99; [p. 88, ed. 1777.—Sect. vii.] The very same view of the subject has been lately taken by the Comte de la Place, in his *Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*. "L'axiome connu sous le nom de *principe de la raison suffisante* s'étend aux actions même que l'on juge indifférentes. La volonté la plus libre ne peut sans un motif déterminant leur donner naissance, &c.—l'opinion contraire est une illusion de l'esprit qui perdant de vue les raisons fugitives du choix de la volonté dans les choses indifférentes, se persuade qu'elle s'est déterminée d'elle-même et sans motifs."—*Essai Philosophique*, &c. p. 5; [p. 3, *second* edition, 1814. The Essay was afterwards greatly enlarged in a *fifth* edition, 1825.]

* [*Elements*, p. 227.]

the *previous circumstances*, it is a manifest contradiction to suppose the 'power of doing an action or its contrary, all the previous circumstances remaining the same;' since that supposes the power to act *voluntarily against a volition*." After this Dr. Magee justly and pertinently adds, "Mr. Belsham might surely have spared himself the trouble of the ninety-two pages which follow."*

But why have recourse, with Belsham and Priestley in this argument, to the indistinct and imperfect recollection of the criminal, at a *subsequent* period, with respect to the state of his feelings while he was perpetrating the crime? Why not make a direct appeal to his consciousness at the very moment when he was doing the deed? Will any person of candour deny, that, in the very act of transgressing an acknowledged duty, he is impressed with a conviction, as complete as that of his own existence, that his will is free; and that he is abusing, contrary to the suggestions of reason and conscience, his Moral Liberty?

Sometimes, indeed, when we are under the influence of a violent appetite or passion, our judgment is apt to see things in a false light; and hence a wise man learns to distrust his own opinion when he is thus circumstanced; and to act, not according to his present judgment, but according to those general maxims of propriety of which his reason had previously approved in his cooler hours.[1] All this, however, evidently proceeds on the supposition of his *Free-agency;* and, so far from implying any belief on *his* part of Fatalism or of Moral Necessity, evinces in a manner peculiarly striking and satisfactory, the power which he feels himself to possess, not only over the *present*, but over the *future* determinations of his will. In some *other* instances, it happens that I believe *bona fide* an action to be right, at the moment I perform it, and afterwards discover that I judged improperly;—perhaps, from

* [*Appendix*, &c.—*Works*, Vol. II. p. 62.]

[1] [In this power of yielding to the suggestions of Reason in opposition to the impulse of Passion, Cicero places the Free-agency of Man; and the idea is well worthy of a careful examination —*Tusc. Disp.* Lib. IV. cap. vi.]

want of sufficient information, or from a careless and partial view of the subject. In such a case I may undoubtedly regret as a misfortune what has happened. I may blame myself for my carelessness in not having acquired the proper information before I acted; but I cannot consider myself as criminal in acting at that moment according to the views which I then entertained. On the contrary, if I had acted in opposition to these views, although my conduct might have been agreeable to the dictates of a more enlightened understanding than my own, yet with respect to myself the action would have been wrong.

If the doctrine of Necessity were just, what possible foundation could there be for the distinction we always make between an accidental hurt and an intended *injury*, when received from another; or for the different sentiments of *regret* and of *remorse* that we experience according as the misfortunes we suffer are the consequences of our own misconduct or not. What an alleviation of our sufferings when we are satisfied that we cannot consider ourselves as the authors of them; and what a cruel aggravation of our miseries, when we can trace them to something in which we have been obviously to blame!

I shall only add further on this head, (and it is a consideration which deserves the serious attention of all those who are inclined to the scheme of Necessity, from an idea that it overturns the doctrine of a *future retribution*,) that the connexion between the premises and the conclusion in this hypothesis is far from being so indisputable as they may imagine. On a superficial view of the subject, indeed, it may appear that the Deity cannot, in consistence with his *justice*, punish us for what it was not in our power to prevent. But it must be remembered, that the same necessity which destroys *moral evil* on the part of man, subverts all the received notions concerning the *moral attributes of God;* and makes it quite nugatory to speak of what is to be expected either from his justice or goodness. This argument is stated with great force and ability in one of the chapters of Butler's *Analogy*;* and although it

* [Part I. chap. vi.]

was originally proposed with a very different view by that profound and excellent writer, I once heard it urged from the pulpit (with the authority of Bishop Butler's name) as a defence of the doctrines of Predestination and the Absolute Decrees. I have nowhere, however, seen it proposed in a form so bold as in a historical article of the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, from which I shall quote a few sentences in the author's own words. "While the king," (James II. of Great Britain,) "was involved in the deepest distress, in consequence of the desertion of his army, and the success of the Prince of Orange, he was doomed to suffer from the conduct of his daughter, the Princess Anne, (married to Prince George of Denmark,) a species of distress still more severe. . . . . If Heaven, in this world, ever interposes its avenging arm between guilt and happiness, may we not consider the loss of seventeen children as the penalty which it exacted from the mother, who had broken the heart of the most indulgent father? and, as if this exaction had not been sufficiently severe, the infliction of the punishment PRECEDED the commission of the crime."[1]

If crimes and their appropriate punishments be both the effects of the absolute decrees of God, it is certainly not more inconsistent with his justice that the punishment should PRECEDE the crime than follow after it.

SECT. VII.—OF THE SCHEMES OF FREE-WILL, AND OF NECESSITY CONSIDERED AS INFLUENCING PRACTICE.

Collins, in his *Inquiry concerning Human Liberty*, after endeavouring to show that "*liberty* can only be grounded on the absurd principles of Epicurean atheism," observes, that "the Epicurean atheists, who were the most popular and most numerous sect of the atheists of antiquity, were the great assertors of *Liberty*;[2] as on the other side, the Stoics, who were

[1] Article, *Anne, Queen of Great Britain.*

[2] In proof of Collins's assertion, that the ancient Epicureans were advocates for

the most popular and numerous sect among the religionaries of antiquity, were the great assertors of *Fate* and *Necessity*. The case was also the same among the Jews as among the heathens.[1] The Sadducees, who were esteemed an irreligious and atheistical sect, maintained the Liberty of man. But the Pharisees, who were a religious sect, ascribed all things to Fate or to God's ap-

man's Free-agency, a reference is made by him to the following lines of Lucretius.

"Denique, si semper motus connectitur omnis,
Et vetere exoritur semper novus ordine certo,
Nec declinando faciunt primordia motus
Principium quoddam, quod Fati fœdera rumpat,
Ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur
Libera per terras unde hæc animantibus extat,
Unde est hæc (inquam) *fatis avolsa voluntas*,
Per quam progredimur, quo ducit quemque voluptas," &c. &c.

Lib. II. 251.

But it is to be observed that the liberty here ascribed to the will is nothing more than the liberty of *spontaneity*, which is conceded to it by Collins, and indeed by all Necessitarians, without exception, since the time of Hobbes. Lucretius, indeed, speaks of this liberty as an exception to universal fatalism; but he nevertheless considers it as a necessary effect of some cause, to which he gives the name of *clinamen*, so as to render man as completely a piece of passive mechanism as he was supposed to be by Collins and Hobbes. The reason, too, which he gives for this is, that, if the case were otherwise, *there would be an effect without a cause*.

"Quare in seminibus quoque idem fateare necesse 'st,
Esse aliam præter plagas et pondera *causam*,
Motibus, unde hæc est nobis innata potestas;
De nihilo quoniam fieri nil posse videmus.
Pondus enim prohibet, ne plagis omnia fiant
Externa quasi vi: sed ne mens ipsa necessum
Intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agendis;
Et devicta quasi cogatur ferre, patique;
Id facit exiguum *clinamen* principiorum
Nec regione loci certâ, nec tempore certo."

Ibid 284.

Fatis avolsa voluntas.—On this expression of Lucretius the following acute remarks are made by the French translator, (M. de la Grange.) They are not improbably from the pen of the Baron d'Holbach, who is said to have contributed many notes to this edition. (*Dict. Historique*, Art. *Grange*.) Whoever the author was, he was evidently strongly struck with the inconsistency of this particular tenet with the general principles of the Epicurean philosophy.

"On est surpris qu'Epicure fonde la liberté humaine sur la déclinaison des atomes. On demande si cette déclinaison est nécessaire, ou si elle est simplement accidentelle. Nécessaire, comment la liberté peut-elle en être le résultat? Accidentelle, par quoi est-elle déterminée? Mais on devroit bien plutôt en être surpris, qu'il lui soit venu en idée de rendre l'homme libre dans un système qui suppose un enchaînement nécessaire de causes et d'effets. C'étoit une recherche curieuse, que la raison qui a pu faire d'Epicure l'apôtre de la liberté." For the theory which follows on this point I must refer to the work in question.—See *Traduction Nouvelle de Lucrèce, avec des Notes* par M. de la Grange, Vol. I. pp. 218 220. A Paris, 1768.

[1] With respect to the opinions of the Sadducees and the Pharisees on man's Free-agency, see the notes on Mosheim's translation of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Vol. I. pp. 9, 10, [folio edition; p. 9, quarto edition.]

pointment; and it was the first article of their creed, that *Fate and God do all;* and consequently, they could not assert a *true Liberty*,[1] when they asserted a *liberty* together with this fatality and necessity of all things."[2]

To the same purpose Edwards attempts to show, (and it is one of the weakest parts of his book,) that the scheme of Free-will (by affording an exception to that dictate of common sense which leads us to refer every event to a cause) would destroy the proof *a posteriori* for the being of God. One thing is certain, that the two schemes of Atheism and of Necessity have been hitherto always connected together in the history of modern philosophy: not that I would, by any means, be understood to say, that every Necessitarian must *ipso facto* be an Atheist, or even that any presumption is afforded, by a man's attachment to the former sect, of his having the slightest bias in favour of the latter, but only that every modern Atheist I have ever heard of has been a Necessitarian. I cannot help adding, that by far the ablest Necessitarians who have yet appeared, have been those who followed out their principles till they ended in

[1] In this passage Collins plainly proceeds on the supposition, that all Fatalists are of course Necessitarians, (Collins states this afterwards more strongly in what he says of the Pharisees, see pp. 54, 55,) and I agree with him in thinking, that this would be the case if they reasoned consequentially. It is certain, however, that a great proportion of those who have belonged to the first sect have disclaimed all connexion with the second. The Stoics themselves furnish one very remarkable instance. I do not know any author by whom the liberty of the will is stated in stronger and more explicit terms than it is by Epictetus, in the first sentence of the *Enchiridion*. Indeed, the Stoics seem, with their usual passion for exaggeration, to have carried their ideas about the freedom of the will to an unphilosophical extremo.

[If the belief of man's Free-agency has thus maintained its ground among professed Fatalists, it need not appear surprising that it should have withstood the strong arguments against it, which the doctrine of the *eternal decrees* of God, and even that of the Divine *prescience*, appear, at first sight, to furnish. Accordingly, St. Augustine (distinguished in Ecclesiastical History by the title of the *Doctor of Grace*) has asserted the liberty of the will in terms as explicit as those in which he has announced the theological maxims with which it is most difficult to reconcile it. "Quocirca," &c.] [Then follows the passage from the *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. V. c. x., which is given in the original, *supra*, *Works*, Vol. I. p. 575; and in a translation, *infra*, at the conclusion of this Appendix.—*Ed.*]

[2] Pp. 54, 55.—See the authorities referred to by Collins; see also the sequel of the above passage. [In Argument ii.]

Spinozism; a doctrine which differs from Atheism more in words than in reality.

It has been objected by a most respectable writer, (the late pious and learned Sir H. Moncreiff, a great admirer both of Edwards's character and talents,) to those who, "without attempting to discuss Edwards's argument, set it down as nothing more than an intricate puzzle or quibble;" that, "if this argument be what they represent it, there must be some way to unravel the puzzle, although they have not the skill, or will not take the trouble to discover it."[1]

To this proposition I object—1*st*, Because I can see little or nothing in the argument of Edwards which has not been already completely answered by Clarke or by Reid. 2*d*, Because the consequences to which it leads (although, to the satisfaction of a few speculative men, they may perhaps be evaded by means of subtle refinements and distinctions) are so directly contrary to the common feelings and judgments of mankind, as to authorize any person of plain understanding boldly to cut asunder the knot which he was unable to unloose. In looking over the article Sophisms in our elementary books of Logic, I find many (such as the Achilles and Tortoise, the Liar, the Bald, the Sorites or Acervus, and various others) to which I should be much more at a loss to give a satisfactory reply than to anything alleged by Collins or Edwards; and yet I should think it a most unwise employment of my time, to waste an hour in the refutation of any of them. Nor would I feel much mortification if I should be accused of a want of candour for neither consenting to admit the conclusion, nor to undertake the irksome task of combating the premises. Of the truths disputed in these sophisms, there is not one, in my opinion, more certain than that of man's Free-agency; a fact of which our consciousness is so complete, that we cannot even form a conception of a more perfect freedom of choice than we actually possess. On this point it has been justly and acutely remarked by M. Necker, that "when we reflect upon our faculties, we can with ease imagine a superior degree of intelligence, of knowledge, of memory,

[1] *Life of the Reverend Dr. John Erskine.*

of foresight, and of every other property of our understanding; Liberty is the only part of ourselves to which imagination cannot add anything."[1]

In Bernier's *Abridgment of the Philosophy of Gassendi*, there are some very judicious observations on the practical tendency of the scheme of Necessity; a subject on which his opinion is entitled to great weight, not only from his long residence among the followers of Mahomet, but from those prepossessions in favour of this scheme, which he may be presumed to have imbibed from his education under Gassendi. I shall quote a few of his concluding reflections.

"De tout ceci jugez si j'ai sujet de croire cette doctrine si pernicieuse à la société humaine. Certainement à considérer que ce sont principalement les Mahumétans qui s'en trouvent infectées, et que c'est principalement encore parmi elles présentement qu'elle est fomentée et entretenue, je douterois presque que ce fut l'invention de quelques uns de ces tyrans d'Asie, comme auroit peut-être un Mahomet, un Tamerlane, un Bajazet, ou quelqu'un de ces autres fléaux du monde qui pour assouvir leur ambition demandoit des soldats qui étant entêtés de prédestination, s'abandonnassent brutalement à tout, et se précipitassent même volontiers, aux occasions, la tête la première dans le fossé d'une ville assiégée pour servir du pont au reste de l'armée.

"Je sçais bien qu'on pourroit peut-être dire que cette opinion est mal prise et mal entendue par les Mahumétans; mais quoi qu'il en soit, que doit on raisonablement penser d'une doctrine qui peut si aisément être mal-prise, et qui peut, soit par erreur ou autrement, avoir si étranges suites?"[2]

[1] [Cicero observes, that Chrysippus, the chief author of the Sophisms here alluded to, was himself unable to resolve them; (*Acad. Quæst.* Lib. IV. capp. xxviii. xxix.) And Aristotle acknowledges that some of them are almost inexplicable. (*Ethica ad Nicom.* Lib. VII. cap. ii.)]—On the subject of such sophisms as the Achilles and the Tortoise, many books, we are told, were written, and various individuals are mentioned who fell into fatal diseases, or died of grief, in consequence of their fruitless endeavours to clear up the mystery.—See Bayle's *Dictionary*, Art. *Euclid of Megara.*

[2] See Tome VIII. p. 536, [first edition.]

The scheme of Free-will is not liable to any such objection, inasmuch as it seems quite impossible for the most ingenious sophistry to pervert it to any pernicious purpose. Indeed, its great object is to reconcile with the conclusions of our reason, those moral feelings which are so essential both to our own happiness and to the interests of society, that they have been regarded by some of the most acute as well as candid partisans of Necessity, as merciful illusions of the imagination, by which man is blinded to the melancholy fact of his real condition: "*Nervis alienis mobile lignum!*"

There is good reason to believe, that the practical consequences produced by the scheme of Necessity at the time of the Reformation alarmed the minds of some very able men by whom it was at first adopted. "The Germans," says Dr. Burnet, "saw the ill effects of the doctrine of the Decrees. Luther changed his mind about it, and Melanchthon wrote openly against it; and since that time the whole stream of the Lutheran churches has run the other way. But still Calvin and Bucer were both for maintaining the doctrine; only they warned the people not to think much about them, since they were secrets that men could not penetrate into. Hooper and many other good writers did often exhort the people from entering into these curiosities; and a caveat to the same purpose was put into the article about Predestination."[1]

"Concerning the disputants themselves," says Dr. Jortin, "we may safely affirm, that the defenders of the Liberty of man, and of the *conditional* decrees of God, have been, *beyond all comparison*, the more learned, judicious, and *moderate men*; and that severity and oppression have appeared most on the other side."[2]

Priestley has somewhere very justly remarked, that there are some men so happily born, that no speculative theories are likely to mislead them from their duty; and of the truth of his observation, I sincerely believe that his own private life afforded a very striking example. Little stress, therefore, is to

[1] Burnet, *On the Reformation*, Part II. p. 113.
[2] Jortin's *Dissertations*, p. 5.

be laid on *individual cases* as arguments for or against the practical tendency of any philosophical dogma. The case, however, is very different with respect to observations made on so great a scale as those above quoted from Bernier and Burnet.[1]

[Here follows in the MS. the extract from Gray's *Letters*, which will be found in Note D. of this volume.—*Ed.*]

SECT. VIII.—ON THE ARGUMENT FOR NECESSITY DRAWN FROM THE PRESCIENCE OF THE DEITY.

In reviewing the arguments that have been advanced on the opposite sides of this question, I have hitherto taken no notice of those which the Necessitarians have founded on the *Prescience of the Deity*, because I do not think them fairly applicable to the subject; inasmuch as they draw an inference from what is altogether *placed beyond the reach of our faculties*, against a fact for which every man *has the evidence of his own consciousness*. Some of the advocates, however, for liberty, have ventured to meet their adversaries even on this ground; in particular, Dr. Clarke in his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*,* and Dr. Reid in his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*.† Both of these writers have attempted to show, with much ingenuity and subtilty of reasoning, that, even although we should admit the prescience of God in the fullest extent in which it has ever been ascribed to Him, it does not lead to any conclusion inconsistent with man's Free-

[1] The practical influence of the scheme of Necessity ought not to be judged of from the lives of its speculative partisans, but from those of persons who have been educated from their early years in the belief of it. [Priestley family,—Pierpoint Edwards, Judge of Connecticut, son of Jonathan Edwards, —and Col. Burr, Dr. Edwards's grandson. — (Dr. Currie — Mr. Gallandet.) Are these last jottings of the names of Mr. Stewart's two informants?—*Ed.*] In this point of view it might be interesting to trace the history of the immediate descendants of some of the most zealous advocates for Necessity. If the principles which they have advanced be just, particularly those they have laid down on the influence of education, the moral characters of their pupils should, or rather *must* be, exemplary in no common degree.

* [Props. ix. x.]

† [*Essay* IV. chap. x.—*Works*, pp. 629-632.]

agency. On their speculations on this point I have no commentary to offer.

The argument for Necessity, drawn from the Divine Prescience, is much insisted on both by Collins* and Edwards;† more especially by the latter, who, after insisting at great length on "God's certain foreknowledge of the volitions of moral agents," undertakes to show, that "this *foreknowledge* infers a Necessity of Volition as much as an absolute decree."‡

Mr. Belsham, on this as on other occasions, rises above his predecessors in the boldness of his assertions. "The principal argument in favour of moral necessity, and the insurmountable objection against the existence of philosophical liberty in any degree, or under any restrictions whatever, arises from the prescience of God. Liberty and prescience stand in direct hostility to each other. A philosopher to be consistent, must give up one or the other."[1]—"Upon the whole, the advocates for philosophical liberty are reduced to the dilemma either of denying the foreknowledge of God, *and thus robbing the Deity of one of his most glorious attributes*, or of admitting that God is the author of evil, in the same sense, and in the same degrees in which this doctrine is charged upon the Necessitarians."[2]

On this argument, I shall make but one remark, that, if it be conclusive, it only serves to identify still more the creed of the Necessitarians with that of the Spinozites. For if God certainly foresees all the future volitions of his creatures, he must, for the same reason, foresee all *his own* future volitions; and if this foreknowledge infers *a necessity* of volition in the one case, how is it possible to avoid the same inference in the other?

Mr. Belsham seems to have been *not* unaware of this inference; but shows no disposition on account of it to shrink from his principles. "It is always to be remembered that the prescience of an *agent* necessarily includes predestination, though that of a *spectator* may not. It is nonsense to say that a

* [*Philosophical Inquiry*, &c., Argument iv.]

† [*Inquiry*, Part II. Sects. xi. xii.]

‡ [Sect. xii. corol. 1.]

[1] *Elements*, p. 302.

[2] Ibid. p. 293.

Being does not mean to bring an event to pass which he foresees to be the certain and inevitable consequence of his own previous voluntary action."[1]

I have already mentioned the attempt of Clarke and others to show that no valid argument against the scheme of Free-will can be deduced from the Prescience of God, even supposing *that* prescience to extend to *all* the actions of voluntary beings. On this point I must decline offering any opinion of my own, because I conceive it as placed far beyond the reach of our faculties. It is sufficient for my purpose to observe, that, if it could be demonstrated, (which, in my opinion, has not yet been done,) that the prescience of the volitions of moral agents is incompatible with the Free-agency of man, the logical inference would be, *not* in favour of the scheme of Necessity, but that there are some events, the *foreknowledge of which implies an impossibility.* Shall we venture to affirm that it exceeds the power of God to permit such a train of contingent events to take place, as his own foreknowledge shall not extend to? Does not such a proposition detract from the omnipotence of God, in the same proportion in which it aims to exalt his omniscience?

It is a circumstance not a little curious in the history of the human mind, that, while men have been in all ages impressed with this irresistible conviction of their own Free-agency, they have nevertheless had a proneness not only to admit the prescience of God in its fullest extent, but to suppose that there is a *fatal and irresistible destiny* attending every individual. Traces of this opinion occur in every country of the world of which we have received any account. We meet with it among the sages of Greece, and among the ignorant and unenlightened natives of St. Kilda. The following Arabian tale, which I quote from the late Mr. Harris, will place the import of the doctrine I now allude to in a more striking light than I could possibly do by any philosophical comment.

"The Arabians tell us," says this author, "that as Solomon (whom they supposed a magician from his superior wisdom)

[1] *Elements*, p. 307.

was one day walking with a person in Palestine, his companion said to him with horror, *what hideous spectre is that which approaches us? I don't like his visage. Send me, I pray thee, to the remotest mountain of India.* Solomon complied, and the very moment he was sent off the spectre arrived. *Solomon,* (said he,) *how came that fellow here? I was to have fetched him from the remotest mountain of India.* Solomon answered, ANGEL OF DEATH, *thou wilt* FIND *him there."*[1]

The general prevalence of Fatalism among unenlightened nations is the obvious effect of the insidious lessons inculcated by their religious instructors. The chief expedient employed by the priesthood in all rude countries for subjecting the minds of the people, is to impress them with a belief that it is possible by the study of auguries, of omens, or of judicial astrology, to gratify that misguided curiosity which disposes blind mortals anxiously to tear asunder the merciful veil drawn by Providence over futurity. "Wherever superstition," says Dr. Robertson, "is so established as to form a regular system, this desire of penetrating into the secrets of futurity is connected with it. Divination becomes a religious act; and priests, as the ministers of Heaven, pretend to deliver its oracles to man. They are the only soothsayers, augurs, and magicians, who

[1] [Harris's *Works*, 4to edit. Vol. II. p. 477.—*Philological Inquiries*, Part III. chap. vii. Mr. Harris mentions that this tale was told him by Dr. Gregory Sharpe, Master of the Temple, well known for his learning in Oriental literature.—*Ed.*]—The following remark of M. Ancillon [of Berlin, the son] upon the difference between the Mahometan doctrine of destiny, and that which prevailed upon the same subject among the Ancient Greeks, appears to me just and important. "Il y a une grande différence entre le destin des orientaux, surtout depuis que Mahomet a fait, d'une doctrine généralement répandue avant lui, un article de foi, et le destin du polythéisme Grec. . . . . Le Grec lutte contre le destin, et tout en succombant sous sa force, il fait preuve de liberté: le Mahumétan se résigne en aveugle avant l'évènement; lors même qu'il agit, il agit en homme à qui l'action ne servira de rien. Le premier murmure contre ce pouvoir, et le supporte avec impatience; le second s'en félicite parce qu'il dispense de l'activité. Les Grecs plaçoient la force aveugle dans le destin; et la pensée qui lui résiste, et qui le combat, dans l'homme; chez les Mahumétans la force aveugle est dans l'homme; cette force n'est qu'une force passive, et la pensée est dans le destin."—*Essais Philosophiques, [ou Nouveaux Mélanges de Littérature et de Philosophie;*—Sur le Suicide] par Fréderic Ancillon, Tom I. pp. 150, 151. Paris, 1817.

possess the sacred and important art of disclosing what is hid from other eyes."[1]

Between this creed and that of an inevitable fate or destiny, the connexion is necessary and obvious; and hence in every false religion the scheme of Fatalism may be expected to form not only an *essential*, but the *fundamental* article. The inconsiderable influence which this theological dogma (a dogma, too, peculiarly calculated to affect and even to overwhelm the imagination) has always had in stifling the sentiment of remorse on the commission of a crime, affords a demonstrative proof of the impotence of such scholastic refinements when opposed to the feelings of nature, on a question concerning which these feelings form the only tribunal to which a legitimate appeal can be made. That a criminal, in order to alleviate the pang of remorse, may have sometimes sought for relief in this doctrine is far from being improbable; but no man ever acted on this belief in the common concerns of human life; and, indeed, some of its most zealous partisans have acknowledged, (particularly Lord Kames,) that, were it to prevail universally as a practical principle, the business of the world could not possibly go on.*

In the ancient Stoical system (as I have already observed) the doctrine of Fatalism, and that of man's Free-agency, were both admitted as fundamental articles of belief. "By Fate," says Mrs. Carter,† "the Stoics seem to have understood a series of events appointed by the immutable counsels of God, or that law of his providence by which he governs the world. It is evident by their writings that they meant it in no sense which interferes with the liberty of human actions." Of the truth of this remark the most satisfactory evidence is afforded by the very first sentence of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, in which it is explicitly stated, "That opinion, pursuit, desire, and aversion, and, in one word, whatever are our own actions, are *in our own power*," [ἐφ' ἡμῖν.][2]

[1] *History of America*, Book IV.

* [In the two earlier editions of his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*.— Essay III.]

† [In her *Epictetus*.]

[2] That the doctrine of Fatalism, however, led some of the Stoics to very impious and alarming consequences,

Such, too, is the philosophy of Virgil:

> "Stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus
> Omnibus est vitæ; sed famam extendere factis
> Hoc virtutis opus." [1]

The doctrine, however, of Fatalism, and of an inevitable destiny, must not be confounded with that of the *Divine Prescience*, between which and the Freedom of human actions some of our profoundest philosophers, as I have already observed, (particularly Clarke and Reid,) have laboured to show that there is no inconsistency,[2] while other writers of no less eminence have apprehended that there is no absurdity in supposing that the Deity may, for wise purposes, have chosen to open a source of contingency in the voluntary actions of his creatures, to which no prescience can possibly extend.

Whatever opinion we may adopt on this point, the conclusions formerly stated concerning man's Free-agency remain unshaken. Our own Free-will we know by our consciousness; and we can have no evidence for any other truth so irresistible as this. On the other hand, it would unquestionably be rash and impious in us, from the fact of our own Free-will, to deny that our actions may be foreseen by the Deity, or to measure the Divine attributes by a standard borrowed from our imperfect faculties. The conclusion of St. Augustine on this subject is equally pious and philosophical. "Wherefore we are nowise reduced to the necessity, either by admitting the Prescience of God, to deny the Freedom of the human will, or by admitting the Freedom of the will, to hazard the impious asser-

appears from the following words which Lucan puts into the mouth of Cato.

> "Summum Brute nefas civilia bella fatemur,
> Sed quo fata trahunt, virtus secura sequetur.
> *Crimen erit superis, et me fecisse nocentem.*"
> *Phars.* ii. 254.

See also the Seventh Book of the *Pharsalia*, line 657.—Coplestone, *Prælectiones Academicæ*, p. 277.

[1] The notions of Virgil, however, on this point, as is well observed by Servius, do not seem to have been quite consistent. How are the following lines which he applies to Dido to be reconciled with the above passage?

> "Nam quia nec fato, meritâ nec morte peribat;
> Sed misera ante diem."—*Æn.* iv. 695.

[2] So also Milton, [P. L. iii. 117.]

> "If I foreknew,
> Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
> Which had no less proved certain unforeseen.

tion, that the Prescience of God does not extend to all future contingencies: But, on the contrary, we are disposed to embrace *both* doctrines, and with sincerity to bear testimony to their truth,—the one that our *faith may be sound;* the other that our *lives may be good.*"* [See above, p. 392, Note 1.]

[Nor should the observation, in connexion with St. Austin, be omitted,—that the Scottish Church asserts with equal emphasis, the doctrine of the Absolute Decrees of God, and the doctrine of the Moral Liberty of Man. The theory of Jonathan Edwards, touching the Bondage of the Will, is, on the Calvinistic standard of the Westminster Confession, not only heterodox but heretical; and yet, we have seen the scheme of Absolute Necessity urged, by imposing authority, and even apparently received with general acquiescence, as that exclusively conformable to the recognised tenets of our Ecclesiastical Establishment! But Mr. Stewart did not, like so many northern divines, imagine that the opinion of Human Liberty which he so zealously advocated as the necessary basis of religion and morality, was not, equally, the one philosophically true, and the one theologically orthodox. See *Dissertation*, *ut supra*, p. 575.—*Ed.*]

* [Here follow in the MS., as a portion of the text, the observations upon Locke which, with additions, will be found as finally modified by Mr. Stewart, in the second part of Note D, or its correlatives.]

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

TO

BOOKS FIRST AND SECOND.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note A. Book I. p. 131.—In Posthumous Fame and Immortality.

There is a remarkable resemblance between the passage of Wilson and the following, by Jean Desmaizeaux, Bayle.

"Let us put a little strength into, and in Bayle's name exercise upon what has been said this grave and reputable, the virtue we want, a moral negligency. Where is the man who has been after with so much avidity? Is it a consolation, Peter or William, that names, when it were a thousand years to the present, will then be of no moment. To what a contemptible height is hope, that is a curious subject, and a torment, proceeds to every action and humanity, and to engage the master's diligence, at the pleasure, with all things to an empire to secure. Fancies are given to the passion to a pretty toy to play withal. And this Peter or William, what is it but a word, that is all one, but a name, or two of the letters of a pen, as easy to be varied as the face thus. But I would see how to write as to immortality, the part of a man, remains, a thought, a fiction, or an invention." The question is, whether of these names ought to be remembered, or to many ought, battles, improvements, and services done to the commonwealth, or that be known mankind."

"Whether these are tokens of the just esteem of a thousand people. How many persons are there in Europe of the same name and surname. Who knows or gives one thought about them? Who knows whether they are born or dead? Who knows whether there be any such persons? Who knows whether they have had upon any account, or the most eminent character of the age, so as to be of any advantage to them?"

"To answer, as many such questions."

Desmaizeaux, in his Dialogues of the Dead, has Dialogues between Socrates and Henry Earl Marlow, the latter on the same argument. "The humble and modest, he no account as likewise a man, as he values it, to consider how to write of himself for after-remembrance. With me this desire is the remembrance of my friends, and to be remembered by them after I am dead. He endeavoured to make himself remembered by those after a man

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

eux et leurs noms? . . . Du moins, ce qui peut manquer à nos noms, c'est une mort, pour ainsi dire grammaticale; quelques changemens de lettres les mettent en état de ne pouvoir plus servir qu'à donner de l'embarras aux sçavans," &c. &c.

A thought substantially the same with that of Wollaston occurs in Cowley's Ode entitled *Life and Fame*.

"Great Cæsar's self a higher place does claim
In the seraphic entity of fame.
He, since that toy his death,
Does fill each mouth and breath.
'Tis true, the two immortal syllables remain;
But oh, ye learned men, explain,
What essence—substance—what hypostasis
In five poor letters is?
In those alone does the great Cæsar live.
'Tis all the conquer'd world could give."

Notwithstanding the merit of these lines, I should hardly have thought it worth while to quote them, if Dr. Hurd (a critic of no common ingenuity as well as learning) had not shown, by his comment upon them, how completely he had misapprehended the reasoning both of the poet and of the philosopher.

"This lively ridicule," says Hurd, "on posthumous fame, is well enough placed in a poem or declamation; but we are a little surprised to find so grave a writer as Wollaston diverting himself with it. In reality," says he, "the man is not known ever the more to posterity, because his name is transmitted to them. *He* does not live, because his *name* does. When it is said, 'Julius Cæsar subdued Gaul,' &c., &c., the sophistry is apparent. Put Cato in the place of Cæsar, and then see whether that great man do not *live* in his name *substantially*, that is, to good purpose, if the impression which these two *immortal syllables* make on the mind be of use in exciting posterity, or any one man to the love and imitation of Cato's virtue."—Hurd's *Cowley*, Vol. I. p. 179.

In this remark Hurd plainly proceeds on the supposition, that Wollaston's *sophistry* is directed against the *utility* of the love of posthumous glory, whereas the only point in dispute relates to the *origin* of this principle, which Wollaston seems to have thought, if it could not be resolved into the rational motive of self-love, must be the illegitimate and contemptible offspring of our own stupidity and folly.

How very different must Cowley's feelings have been when he wrote the metaphysical ode referred to by Hurd, from those which inspired that fine burst of juvenile emotion which forms the *exordium* to his Poetical Works!

"What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come my own?
I shall, like beasts or common people, die,
Unless you write my elegy.

* * * * *

What sound is't strikes mine ear?
Sure I fame's trumpet hear.
It sounds like the last trumpet, for it can
Raise up the buried man."

NOTE B, (Book I. p. 155.)—*Pætus and Arria.*

Although no English version can possibly do justice to the conciseness and spirit of Pliny's own language, I shall, for the sake of my unlearned readers, quote the anecdote referred to in the text, in the admirable translation of Mr. Melmoth.

"I have frequently observed, that amongst the noble actions and remarkable sayings of distinguished persons, in either sex, those which have been most celebrated have not always been the most illustrious; and I am confirmed in this opinion by a conversation I had yesterday with Fannia. This lady is granddaughter to that celebrated Arria, who animated her husband to meet death by her own glorious example. She informed me of several particulars relating to Arria, not less heroical than this famous action of hers, though less taken notice of, which, I am persuaded, will raise your admiration as much as they did mine. Her husband, Cæcinna Pætus, and his son, were both at the same time attacked with a dangerous illness, of which the son died. This youth, who had a most beautiful person and amiable behaviour, was not less endeared to his parents by his virtues than by the ties of affection. His mother managed his funeral so privately, that Pætus did not know of his death. Whenever she came to his bed-chamber, she pretended her son was better; and as often as he inquired after his health, would answer that *he had rested well*, or, *had eaten with an appetite*. When she found she could no longer restrain her grief, but her tears were gushing out, she would leave the room, and having given vent to her passion, return again with dry eyes, as if she had dismissed every sentiment of sorrow at her entrance.—That other action of hers was no doubt truly noble, when, drawing the dagger, she plunged it in her breast, and then presented it to her husband, with that ever memorable, I had almost said divine expression,—*Pætus, it is not painful.* It must, however, be considered when she spoke and acted thus she had the prospect of immortal glory before her eyes to encourage and support her. But was it not something much greater, without the view of such powerful motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief, and cheerfully seem the mother when she was so no more?"—[The reference to the original is—*Epistolarum*, Lib. III. ep. xvi. Besides Pliny, the exhortation of Arria is commemorated by Tacitus, Dion, and Martial. The noble epigram of the last may be added:—

"Casta suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto,
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis.
Si qua fides, vulnus, quod feci, non dolet, inquit:
Sed quod tu facies, hoc mihi, Pæte, dolet."—(I. xvi.)—*Ed.*]

NOTE C, (Book II. p. 333.)—*Smith's Moral Theory.*

I shall throw together in this note, without much regard to order or connexion, a few slight observations on detached passages of Mr. Smith's theory. Some of

these observations may, I hope, be useful in illustrating more fully certain phenomena referred by him, rather too exclusively, to the principle of sympathy or fellow-feeling.

In proof of the pleasure annexed to mutual sympathy, Mr. Smith remarks,—"that a man is mortified when, after having endeavoured to divert the company, he looks around and sees that nobody laughs at his jest but himself."* It may be doubted, however, if in this case a disappointed sympathy be the chief cause of his uneasiness. Various other circumstances undoubtedly conspire, particularly the censure which the silence of the company conveys of his taste and judgment, together with the proof it exhibits of their sullenness and want of good humour.

"The pleasure, too, which," according to Mr. Smith, (Ibid.) "we receive from reading to a stranger a poem whose effect on ourselves has been destroyed by repetition," may be explained without any refinement about *sympathy*, by the satisfaction we always feel in communicating pleasure to another, combined with the flattering though indirect testimony paid to the justness of our taste, by its coincidence with that of an individual whose judgment we respect. The sympathy of an acknowledged fool would certainly be in the same circumstances a source of mortification.

In mentioning these considerations, I do not mean to dispute that there is an exquisite pleasure arising from mutual sympathy; but only to suggest, that Mr. Smith has ascribed to this principle solely, various phenomena, in accounting for which other causes appear to be no less deserving of attention.

The versatile and accommodating manners which Mr. Smith has so beautifully described in various passages of his *Theory*, may be assumed from different motives:—In some men from a desire to promote the happiness of those around them; and where this is the case, it is unquestionably one of the most amiable and meritorious forms in which benevolence can appear, and contributes more by its daily and constant operation to increase the comfort of human life, than those splendid exertions of virtue which we are so seldom called upon to make. In other men, in whom the benevolent affections are not so strong, it may proceed chiefly from a view to their own tranquillity and amusement, and may render them agreeable and harmless companions, without giving them any claim to the appellation of *virtuous*. In many it arises from views of self-interest and ambition; and in such men, whatever pleasure we may have derived from their society, these qualities never fail to inspire universal distrust and dislike, as soon as they are known to be the real motives of that pliancy and versatility with which we were at first captivated. It would appear, therefore, that the accommodating temper, where it is approved as morally *right*, is not approved on its own account, but as an expression of a *benevolent* disposition.

From the combined efforts of the actor and of the spectator towards a mutual sympathy, Mr. Smith endeavours to trace the origin of two different sets of virtues. "Upon the effort of the spectator to enter into the situation of the person principally concerned, and to raise his sympathetic emotions to a level with the emotions of the actor, are founded the gentle, the amiable virtues, the virtues of candid condescension and indulgent humanity. Upon the effort of the person principally

* [*Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part I. sect. i. chap. 2.]—Vol. I. p. 16, sixth edition.

concerned to lower his own emotions, so as to correspond as nearly as possible with those of the spectator, are founded the great, the awful, and respectable virtues, the virtues of self-denial, of self-government, of that command of the passions which subjects all the movements of our nature to what our own dignity and honour, and the propriety of our own conduct require."* If the word *qualities* were substituted for *virtues*, I agree in general with this doctrine. The mode of expression, however, certainly requires correction. "Candid condescension" and "indulgent humanity" are always amiable; and when they really proceed from a disposition habitually benevolent, are with great propriety called *virtues*. "Self-denial and self-government" are always *respectable*, and sometimes *awful* qualities; because they indicate a force of mind which few men possess; but it depends on the *motives* from which they are exercised, whether they indicate a virtuous or a vicious character.

As a farther illustration of the foregoing doctrine, Mr. Smith considers particularly the degrees of the different passions which are consistent with propriety, and endeavours to show, that in every case it is decent or indecent to express a passion strongly, according as mankind are disposed or not disposed to sympathize with it. "It is unbecoming, for example, to express strongly any of those passions which arise from a certain condition of the body; because other men who are not in the same condition cannot be expected to sympathize with them. It is unbecoming to cry out with bodily pain, because the sympathy felt by the spectator bears no proportion to the acuteness of what is felt by the sufferer. The case is somewhat similar with those passions which take their origin from a particular turn or habit of the imagination."†

All violent expressions of such passions are undoubtedly offensive, and good breeding dictates that they should be restrained; but *not* because the spectator finds it difficult to enter into the situation of the person principally concerned; perhaps the opposite reason would be nearer the truth. To eat voraciously in the presence of a company who have already dined, would be obviously indecent; but, I apprehend, not so much so as to eat even moderately in presence of one whom we knew to be hungry, and who was not permitted to share in the repast. With respect to *bodily pain*, it appears to me that there is no calamity whatever which so completely interests the spectator, or with which his sympathy is so acute and lively. It is on this account that a steady composure under it, while it indicates the manly quality of self-command, has something in it peculiarly amiable, when we suppose that it proceeds in any degree from a tenderness for the feelings of others. In many surgical operations it is probable that the imagination of the pain exceeds the reality; and there cannot be a doubt, that where the patient is the object of our love, the sufferings which *he* feels require less fortitude than ours.

"In the case of the unsocial passions of hatred and resentment, the sympathy of the spectator is divided between the person who feels the passion and the person who is the object of it. We are concerned for both, and our fear for what the one may suffer damps our resentment for what the other has suffered. Hence the imperfect degree in which we sympathize with such passions; and the pro-

* [Compare Part I. sect. i. chap. 5.]

† [Compare Part I. sect. ii. chap. 1.]

priety, when under their influence, of moderating their expression to a much greater degree than in the case of any other emotions." *

Abstracting from all considerations of this kind, satisfactory reasons may be given for our listening with caution to the dictates of *resentment* when we ourselves are the sufferers. Experience must soon satisfy us how apt this passion is to blind the judgment, and to exaggerate in our estimation the injury we have received; and how certainly we lay in matter for future remorse for our cooler hours, if we obey its first suggestions. A wise man, therefore, learns to delay forming his resolutions till his passion has in some degree subsided;—*not* in order to obtain the sympathy of other men, but in order to secure the approbation of his own conscience. If he conceives to himself what conduct the impartial spectator will approve of, it is merely as an expedient to divest himself of the partialities of self-love; and when he acts agreeably to what he supposes to be, on this occasion, the unbiassed judgment of spectators, his satisfaction arises *not* from the possession of their sympathy, but from a consciousness that he has done his best to ascertain what was *right*, and has regulated his conduct accordingly.

"Where there is no envy in the case, our propensity to sympathize with joy is much stronger than our propensity to sympathize with sorrow.

"It is on account of this dull sensibility to the afflictions of others that magnanimity, amidst great distress, always appears so divinely graceful." †

If this were true, would it not follow that the admiration of heroic magnanimity would be in proportion to the insensibility of the spectator?

"It is because mankind are more disposed to court the favour, to comply with the humours, and to judge with indulgence of the actions of the prosperous, than with those of the unfortunate, that we make parade of our riches, and conceal our poverty."—"It is the misfortunes of kings alone," Mr. Smith adds, "which afford the proper subjects for tragedy." ‡

Of this last proposition I confess I have some doubts, at least to the extent in which it is here stated; and I am inclined to think that in those cases where it holds, it may be easily accounted for on more obvious principles. By far the greater number of tragedies are founded on historical facts; and history records only the transactions of men in elevated stations. But even in *these* tragedies, the most interesting personages are frequently domestics or captives. The old shepherd in *Douglas* is surely a more interesting character than Lord Randolph. And for my own part, I am not ashamed to confess that I have shed more tears at some *Tragédies bourgeoises* and *Comédies larmoyantes* of very inferior merit, than were ever extorted from me by the exquisite poetry of Corneille, Racine, or Voltaire.

The fortunes of the great, indeed, interest us more than those of men in inferior stations. But for this there are various causes, independent of that assigned by Mr. Smith. 1. Their destiny involves the fortunes of many, and frequently affects the public interest. 2. Their situation points them out to public attention, and renders them subjects of general and daily conversation; and, accordingly, we may remark a curiosity perfectly analogous to that which the history of the great excites, with respect to the biography of all men who have been long and constantly in the view of the world. The trifling anecdotes in the life of *Quin* or *Garrick* find as

* [Compare Part I. sect. ii. chap. 3.]

† [Part I. sect. iii. chap. 1.]

‡ [Part I. sect. iii. chap. 2.]

many readers as the important events connected with the History of Frederick the Great.

In my *Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Smith*,* I observed, that, according to the learned translator of Aristotle's *Ethics and Politics*, "the general idea which runs through Mr. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* was obviously borrowed from the following passage of Polybius. 'From the union of the two sexes, to which all are naturally inclined, children are born. When any of these, therefore, being arrived at perfect age, instead of yielding suitable returns of gratitude and assistance to those by whom they have been bred, on the contrary, attempt to injure them by words or actions, it is manifest that those who behold the wrong, after having also seen the sufferings and the anxious cares that were sustained by the parents in the nourishment and education of their children, must be greatly offended and displeased at such proceeding. For man, who, among all the various kinds of animals, is alone endowed with the faculty of reason, cannot, like the rest, pass over such actions but will make reflection on what he sees; and, comparing likewise the future with the present, will not fail to express his indignation at this injurious treatment; to which, as he foresees, he may also at some time be exposed. Thus again, when any one who has been succoured by another in the time of danger, instead of showing the like kindness to this benefactor, endeavours at any time to destroy or hurt him, it is certain that all men must be shocked by such ingratitude, through sympathy with the resentment of their neighbour, and from an apprehension also that the case may be their own. And from hence arises in the mind of every man, a certain *notion* of the nature and force of duty, in which consists both the beginning and the end of justice. In like manner, the man who, in defence of others, is seen to throw himself the foremost into every danger, and even to sustain the fury of the fiercest animals, never fails to obtain the loudest acclamations of applause and veneration from all the multitude, while he who shows a different conduct is pursued with censure and reproach. And thus it is that the people begin to discern the nature of things honourable and base, and in what consists the difference between them; and to perceive that the former, on account of the advantage that attends them, are fit to be admired and imitated, and the latter to be detested and avoided.'"

"The doctrine," says Dr. Gillies, "contained in this passage, is expanded by Dr. Smith into a theory of Moral Sentiments. But he departs from *his author* in placing the perception of right and wrong in sentiment or feeling, ultimately and simply. Polybius, on the contrary, maintains with Aristotle, that these notions arise from reason or intellect operating on affection or appetite; or, in other words, that the moral faculty is a compound, and may be resolved into two simpler principles of the mind."—Gillies's *Aristotle's Ethics and Politics*, Vol. I. p. 302. 2d edit.

The only expression I object to in the preceding sentences, is the phrase *his author*, which has the appearance of insinuating a charge of plagiarism against Mr. Smith; a charge which, I am confident, he did not deserve, and to which the above extract does not in my opinion afford any plausible colour. It exhibits, indeed, an instance of a curious coincidence between two philosophers in their views of the same subject, and as such I have no doubt that Mr. Smith himself

* [*Works*, Vol. IX.]

would have remarked, had it occurred to his memory when he was writing his book. Of such accidental coincidences between different minds, examples present themselves every day to those, who, after having drawn from their internal resources all the lights they could supply on a particular question, have the curiosity to compare their own conclusions with those of their predecessors. And it is extremely worthy of observation, that, in proportion as any conclusion approaches to the truth, the number of previous approximations to it may be reasonably expected to be multiplied.

In the instance before us, however, the question about originality is of little or no moment, for the peculiar merit of Mr. Smith's work does not lie in his general principle, but in the skilful use he has made of it to give a systematical arrangement to the most important discussions and doctrines of Ethics. In this point of view, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* may be justly regarded as one of the most original efforts of the human mind in that branch of science to which it relates; and even if we were to suppose that it was first suggested to the author by a remark of which the world was in possession for two thousand years before, this very circumstance would only reflect a stronger lustre on the novelty of his design, and on the invention and taste displayed in its execution.

In the same work I have observed, that, "in studying the connexion and filiation of successive theories, when we are at a loss in any instance for a link to complete the continuity of philosophical speculation, it seems much more reasonable to search for it in the systems of the immediately preceding period, and in the inquiries which *then* occupied the public attention, than in detached sentences, or accidental expressions gleaned from the relics of distant ages. It is thus only that we can hope to seize the precise point of view in which an author's subject first presented itself to his attention, and to account to our own satisfaction, from the particular aspect under which he saw it, for the subsequent direction which was given to his curiosity. In following such a plan, our object is not to detect plagiarisms, which we suppose men of genius to have intentionally concealed, but to fill up an apparent chasm in the history of science, by laying hold of the thread which insensibly guided the mind from one station to another." Upon these principles our attention is naturally directed on the present occasion to the inquiries of Dr. Butler, in preference to those of any other author, ancient or modern. At the time when Mr. Smith began his literary career, Butler unquestionably stood highest among the ethical writers of England; and his works appear to have produced a still deeper and more lasting impression in Scotland than in the other part of the island. Of the esteem in which they were held by Lord Kames and Mr. Hume, satisfactory documents remain in their published letters; nor were his writings less likely to attract the notice of Mr. Smith, in consequence of the pointed and unanswerable objections which they contain to some of the favourite opinions of his predecessor Dr. Hutcheson.

The probability of this conjecture is confirmed by the obvious and easy transition which connects the theory of sympathy with Butler's train of thinking in his Sermon *On Self-Deceit*. In order to free the mind from the influence of its artifices, experience gradually teaches us (as Butler has excellently shown) either to recollect the judgments we have formerly passed in similar circumstances on the conduct of others, or to state cases to ourselves, in which we and all our personal

concerns are left entirely out of the question. Hence it was not an unnatural inference, on the first aspect of the fact, that our only ideas of right and wrong, with respect to our own conduct, are derived from our sentiments with respect to the conduct of others. This accordingly (as we have already seen) is the distinguishing principle of Mr. Smith's theory.[1]

I have formerly referred to a note in Butler's fifth *Sermon*, in which he has exposed the futility of Hobbes's definition of Pity.[2] In the same note, it is remarked farther by the very acute and profound author, that Hobbes's premises, if admitted to be sound, so far from establishing his favourite doctrine concerning the selfish nature of man, would afford an additional illustration of the provision made in his constitution for the establishment and maintenance of the social union. "If there be really any such thing as the fiction or imagination of danger to ourselves from sight of the miseries of others, which Hobbes speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of compassion; if there be anything of this sort common to mankind distinct from the reflection of reason, it would be a most remarkable instance of what was furthest from his thoughts, namely, of a mutual sympathy between each particular of the species,—a fellow-feeling common to mankind. It would not indeed be an instance of our substituting others for ourselves, but it would be an example of our substituting ourselves for others." To those who are at all acquainted with Mr. Smith's book, it is unnecessary for me to observe how very precisely Butler has here touched on the general fact which is assumed as the basis of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

In various other parts of Butler's writings, there are manifest anticipations of Mr. Smith's ethical speculations. In his Sermon, for example, *On Forgiveness of Injuries*, he expresses himself thus: "Without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are than our eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due distance, (that is, be really unprejudiced,) we should frequently discern *that* to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn. From this proper point of view we should likewise, in all probability, see something of these latter in ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind; in these cases it magnifies everything which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens everything amiss in ourselves."

The following passage in Butler's Sermon *On Self-Deceit*, is still more explicit. "It would very much prevent our being misled by this self-partiality, to reduce that practical rule of our Saviour—*whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do unto them*,—to our judgment or way of thinking. This rule, you see, consists of two parts. One is to substitute another for yourself when you take a survey of any part of your behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit and reasonable for you to do upon any occasion: The other part is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another; consider yourself as the person affected by such a be-

[1] See pp. 329, 330 of this volume. [2] Ibid. p. 193.

haviour, or towards whom such an action is done, and then you would not only see, but likewise feel the reasonableness or unreasonableness of such an action or behaviour."

The same idea is stated with great clearness and conciseness by Hobbes. "There is an easy rule to know upon a sudden, whether the action I be to do be against the law of nature or not. And it is but this, *That a man imagine himself in the place of the party with whom he hath to do, and reciprocally him in his.* Which is no more but changing (as it were) of the scales; for every man's passion weigheth heavy in his own scale, but not in the scale of his neighbour. And this rule is very well known and expressed in the old dictate, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris.*"[1]

It is observed by Gibbon that this *golden rule* is to be found in a moral treatise of Isocrates:[2]— Α πάσχοντες ὑφ' ἑτέρων ὀργίζεσθε, ταῦτα μὴ ποιεῖτε. See *History of the Decline*, &c.—Vol. X. p. 191.

To this note I beg leave to subjoin the following passage, with which, in my *Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Smith*, [*Works*, Vol. IX.] I have concluded a slight sketch of the work to which the foregoing observations refer.

"Such are the outlines of Mr. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, a work which, whatever opinion we may entertain of the justness of its conclusions, must be allowed by all to be a singular effort of invention, ingenuity, and subtilty. For my own part, I must confess, that it does not coincide with my notions concerning the foundation of morals; but I am convinced, at the same time, that it contains a large mixture of important truth; and that, although the author has sometimes been misled by too great a desire of generalizing his principles, he has had the merit of directing the attention of philosophers to a view of human nature, which had formerly, in a great measure, escaped their notice. Of the great proportion of just and sound reasoning which the theory involves, its striking plausibility is a sufficient proof; for, as the author himself has remarked, no system in morals can well gain our assent, if it does not border, in some respects, upon the truth. 'A system of natural philosophy,' he observes, 'may appear very plausible, and be for a long time generally received in the world, and yet have no foundation in nature; but the author who should assign as the cause of any natural sentiment some principle, which neither had any connexion with it, nor resembled any other principle which had some such connexion, would appear absurd and ridiculous to the most injudicious and unexperienced reader.' The merit, however, of Mr. Smith's performance does not rest here. No work, undoubtedly, can be mentioned, ancient or modern, which exhibits so complete a view of those facts with respect to our moral perceptions, which it is one great object of this branch of science to refer to their general laws, and upon this account it well deserves the careful study of all whose taste leads them to prosecute similar inquiries. These facts are indeed frequently expressed in a language which involves the author's particular theories. But they are always presented in the most happy and beautiful lights; and it is

[1] *Moral and Political Works of Thomas Hobbes*, folio edition, London, 1750, p. 46.

[2] In *Nicocle. Opera*, Tom. I. p. 93, ed. Battie [Tom. I. p. 147, ed. Auger.—Pars iv. § 14.]

easy for an attentive reader, by stripping them of hypothetical terms, to state them to himself with that logical precision, which, in such very difficult disquisitions, can alone conduct us with certainty to the truth.

"It is proper to observe farther, that, with the theoretical doctrines of the book, there are everywhere interwoven with singular taste and address, the purest and most elevated maxims concerning the practical conduct of life; and that it abounds throughout with interesting and instructive delineations of characters and manners. A considerable part of it, too, is employed in collateral inquiries, which, upon every hypothesis that can be formed concerning the foundation of morals, are of equal importance. Of this kind is the speculation formerly mentioned with respect to the influence of Fortune on our moral sentiments, and another speculation, no less valuable, with respect to the influence of Custom and Fashion on the same part of our constitution.[1]

"The style in which Mr. Smith has conveyed the fundamental principles on which his theory rests, does not seem to me to be so perfectly suited to the subject as that which he employs on most other occasions. In communicating ideas which are extremely abstract and subtile, and about which it is hardly possible to reason correctly, without the scrupulous use of appropriated terms, he sometimes presents to us a choice of words, by no means strictly synonymous, so as to divert the attention from a precise and steady conception of his proposition; and a similar effect is in other instances produced by that diversity of forms which, in the course of his copious and seducing composition, the same truth insensibly assumes. When the subject of his work leads him to address the imagination and the heart, the variety and felicity of his illustrations, the richness and fluency of his eloquence, and the skill with which he wins the attention and commands the passions of his readers, leave him, among our English moralists, without a rival."

NOTE D, (Book II. p. 402.)—*Free-will and Necessity; Gray, Locke.*

The following passage in one of Gray's letters has a sufficient connexion with the foregoing Appendix, (*Of Man's Free-agency,*) to justify me in giving it a place here. Indeed, were the connexion much slighter and less obvious than it is, little apology would be necessary for relieving the attention of the reader, by quoting any thing relating to so important a subject from such a pen.

"I am as sorry as you seem to be, that our acquaintance harped so much on the subject of materialism when I saw him with you in town, because it was plain to which side of the long debated question he inclined. That we are, indeed, mechanical and dependent beings, I need no other proof than my own feelings; and from the same feelings I learn with equal conviction, that we are not *merely* such. That there is a power within which struggles against the force and bias of that

[1] I ought to have added, as of still higher moment, the remarks which occur in different parts of his work on the Final Causes of some of our Moral Principles, particularly the general reflections in Part II. sect. ii., beginning, "In every part of the universe we observe means adjusted with the nicest artifice to the ends which they are intended to produce," &c.

These reflections, there can be little doubt, (as I have elsewhere observed,) were meant by the author as an indirect refutation of Mr. Hume's Theory of Utility.—See *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. p. 501. 3d ed. [*supra*, p. 352.]

mechanism, commands its motion, and by frequent practice reduces it to that ready obedience we call *Habit;* and all this in conformity to a preconceived opinion (no matter whether right or wrong,) to that least material of all agents, a Thought. I have known many in his case, who, while they thought they were conquering an old prejudice, did not perceive they were under the influence of one far more dangerous,—one that furnishes us with a ready apology for all our worst actions, and opens to us a full license for doing whatever we please; and yet these very people were not at all the more indulgent to other men, (as they naturally should have been;) their indignation to (at?) such as offended them, their desire of revenge on anybody that hurt them, was nothing mitigated. In short, they wished to be persuaded of that opinion for the sake of its convenience, but were not so in their hearts; and they would have been glad (as they ought in common prudence) that nobody else should think the same, for fear of the mischief that might ensue to themselves. His French Author I never saw, but have read fifty in the same strain, and shall read no more. I can be wretched enough without them."[1]

I shall avail myself of this note to remark, that on the subject of Free-will, though Locke has thrown out many important observations, he is on the whole more indistinct, undecided, and inconsistent, than might have been expected from his powerful mind, when directed to so important a question. This was probably owing to his own strong feelings in favour of man's moral Liberty, combined with the deep impression left on his philosophical creed by the writings of Hobbes, and by the habits of intimacy and friendship in which he lived with the acutest and ablest of all Necessitarians, Anthony Collins.* That Locke conceived himself to be an advocate for Free-will, appears indisputably from many expressions in his chapter *on Power;* and yet in that very chapter he has made various concessions to his adversaries, in which he seems to yield all that was contended for by Hobbes and Collins; and accordingly, he is ranked, with some appearance of truth, by Priestley with those, who, while they opposed verbally the scheme of Necessity, have adopted it substantially without being aware of their mistake.—[Here follow in the MS., as part of the text of the Appendix, an extract from, and some remarks upon Locke, which will be found in the footnote at pp. 296, 297 of the *Dissertation.* —*Works*, Vol. I.—*Ed.*]

[1] Gray's *Works*, by Mason, Letter xxxi. (to Mr. Stonehewer.) [Mitford's edition in quarto, Vol. II. p. 312. Letter lxxv.]

* [Here follow, as a footnote, in the MS. of the Appendix, the contents of Note K K. of *Dissertation.*—*Works*, Vol. I. pp. 670, 671.—*Ed.*]

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